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ABRAHAM M. KLEIN—NEGLECTED GENIUS

Jacob Kabakoff

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JUDAISM, conceived as a free and non-partisan organ, is dedicated to the creative discussion and exposition of the religious, moral and philosophical concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the problems of modern society. Through an exploration of the meaning and needs of the Jewish experience, it hopes to widen the channels of communication between Jews and to affirm Jewish verity and vitality to the world at large.

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JUDAISM

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In increasing measure, modern men are turning again to the quest for a world-view on the issues that are timeless—the meaning of life, the challenge of death, the purpose of suffering, the significance of the individual, his relation to society, and the goal of history. In order to advance this enterprise of spiritual discovery of our time this Journal has been projected. It will be primarily concerned with the philosophy, ethics, and religion of Judaism as a factor in the contemporary world . . .

We are committed to the proposition that Judaism has positive value today for Jews and for the world . . . At the same time, we disassociate ourselves from the dangerous tendency toward the hardening of party lines on the contemporary Jewish scene . . . The members of the Board of Editors belong to every school of Jewish life or to none. The trends popularly referred to as Orthodox, Conservatism, Reform, Reconstructionism, as well as others that as yet have no specific names, have their advocates among us, though no institution or movement is officially represented . . . Undoubtedly, our differences will find expression in these pages, but we shall be at one in opposing the dogmatism which takes for granted that one's own particular standpoint has a monopoly on truth and the authoritarianism which would suppress any contrary point of view.

Judaism will be dedicated to the quest for truth in the spirit of freedom. Our columns will be open to anyone who has something significant to say and the ability to say it well. New and unconventional interpretations, whatever their standpoint, will be welcomed from every source, for we share the conviction of the Talmud that "Both these and the others are the words of the living God."—From the introductory article by Robert Gordis, "Toward a Renaissance of Judaism" in Vol. I, No. 1.

The First Reader

A French "Watergate?"

It is already clear beyond dispute that Watergate will take its place as the greatest scandal in American history, no matter how it is evaluated and how its protagonists are judged—or forgiven. Inevitably, Watergate recalls the greatest scandal in the history of France—the Dreyfus Case. The impact of the Dreyfus affair on Theodore Herzl, which led to his writing of *The Jewish State* and the founding of the Zionist movement, is, of course, well-known. However, the details of the Dreyfus Case itself and its role in the French Establishment—the government, the army, the church and the press—have tended to be forgotten.

In his paper, "The Dreyfus Case—An Affair Without End," *Frederick Busi* narrates the principal events in the Case. He highlights the remarkable similarities between the French scandal and its American counterpart, particularly the motivation which led otherwise decent men to commit crimes for the sake of "loyalty" or "national security." In both France and the United States, the effort succeeded only in undermining the entire structure of confidence in the system of republican government and democratic institutions.

A Case for Natural Law

To mark its fiftieth anniversary, the Haifa Technion convened an international conference of some thirty natural scientists, sociologists, historians and philosophers, both within the Jewish community and without, to discuss the theme, "Ethics In An Age of Pervasive Technology." The Editor of this journal was invited to participate in this conference, and his paper was selected by the conveners for reading at the Opening Session, held in the Haifa Auditorium on December 21, 1974.

The essay addresses itself to what is perhaps the most fundamental issue in ethics today—the need to discover a firm basis for an ethical system in a pluralistic world where religion no longer commands universal assent or can even claim a consensus. The paper examines the possibility of an ethics derived from science and finds it inadequate.

It suggests that the doctrine of "natural law," familiar from ancient and medieval days, can serve this pressing need of the modern age. However, this is possible only if "natural law" is revived and reinterpreted and its assumptions reexamined and revised. Only then can it perform the indispensable function of providing the framework for

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an ethical system capable of commanding the loyalty and assent of modern society.

The paper, "A Basis For Morals: Ethics in a Technological Age," appears in our columns in slightly abridged form. A Hebrew version is being published in the journal, *Gesher*, in Israel.

Sephardim in the Western World

Every observer of the American scene is aware of the contemporary preoccupation with "ethnicity." Since Jews are like other people, only more so, it is no wonder that the banner of "Jewishness" or "Jewish ethnicity" has been unfurled in our day as a standard to which Jews can repair. Often, Jewish ethnicity is offered as a substitute for, if not as an improvement over, attachment to Jewish living and concern with Jewish learning.

However, no cloud is without a silver lining! The stress upon ethnicity has produced an interest in what we may call "sub-ethnic groups." For too long, the dominant Ashkenazic majority in the Jewish people has overlooked, or looked down upon, other branches of the house of Israel. The most significant "sub-ethnic group" in the Jewish people today are the Sephardim, whose problems and contributions in the State of Israel and throughout the world are now just beginning to attract attention.

There has also been a growth of interest in exploring Sephardic history in the Diaspora in general and in America in particular. The current issue of JUDAISM carries two contributions to this important field of Jewish knowledge and self-awareness, *Ruth Birnbaum's* "The Uniqueness of the Early Sephardic Community in America," and *José Faur's* "Early Zionist Ideals Among Sephardim in the Nineteenth Century."

Heschel's Philosophy of Religion

The blending of the philosopher and the poet in the life and work of Abraham J. Heschel continues to speak to a substantial segment of sensitive men and women in our day. Often the emotional appeal is regarded as more pervasive than the intellectual content in his writings. However, beneath the charm of Heschel's style is a core of theological ideas eminently worth examining. *Maurice Friedman* analyzes several key concepts in Heschel's philosophy of religion in his paper, "Divine Need and Human Wonder: The Philosophy of A. J. Heschel."

What is "Religious" in Israel?

The constantly shifting kaleidoscope of Jewish religious praxis in the State of Israel suggests untold interpretations from varying points of view. In his paper, "A Theological Case Study From Israel," *Sinai Ucko* describes the current religious scene in Israel from the vantage point of four decades of life in Israel and an even longer period of involvement in education and theology. With sympathy and understanding, he nonetheless criticizes the view dominant in Israel that with regard to the Jewish religion it is "all or nothing." He rejects the view that any divergence in praxis or reinterpretation in theory is dangerous to the survival of Judaism—a kind of "domino theory" once popular in some American political circles.

The author points out that, aside from the relatively small group, enclosed in ultra-Orthodox enclaves, most of those wearing gaily colored *kippot* and calling themselves Orthodox have never thought through and, therefore, have really not accepted, the theological pre-suppositions of Orthodoxy with regard to the nature of revelation. Were they to examine these theoretic foundations, they might find a very large measure of kinship, the author believes, with the schools of religious thought which we call Conservatism and Liberal Judaism.

Jewish Religion and Nationalism

The rebirth of the State of Israel has generated and, in turn, been stimulated by, a revival of interest in the Bible, which is both the foundation and the capstone of Judaism. Probably the most impressive single work of Biblical scholarship that has emerged in the State of Israel is the seven-volume *Toledot Ha'emunah Hayisraelit* ("The History of the Religion of Israel") by Yehezkel Kaufmann. The over-arching dimensions of this work, as well as other writings by Kaufmann in the field of Biblical scholarship, such as his commentaries on Joshua and Judges, have tended to overshadow and all but obliterate the memory of his great earlier work, before he turned to Biblical scholarship, *Golah Venekhar* ("Exile and Alienation"). This four-volume work is a profound sociological and philosophic study of the character of Jewish exile, the factors making for Jewish survival in the past, and the problematic of Jewish survival in the future.

In her paper, "Israel With and Without Religion," *Janet K. O'Dea* underscores the significance of Kaufmann's analysis of the relationship between Jewish religion and nationalism and the critique he offers of the various schools of "cultural nationalism" which have attempted to create a surrogate for the Jewish religion for a secularized age. At the conclusion of her paper, she draws some implications from Kaufmann's critique bearing upon the philosophy of Mordecai M. Kaplan, as well.

Another Look at I. B. Singer

The special talents of Isaac Bashevis Singer as a novelist and as a short story writer have won for him a very large following. By and large, his focus has been on individual men and women, their hopes, fears, frustrations and defeats, as well on as their very occasional triumphs. However, Singer is a Jewish writer, and, so, the destiny of the Jewish people is far from absent in his work. *Edward Alexander* explores this theme of national peril and hope in his paper, "The Destruction and Resurrection of the Jews in the Fiction of I. B. Singer."

Dialogue is Desirable

One of the remarkable phenomena of the general intellectual landscape has been the emergence of Christian-Marxist Dialogue. Small but significant groups of intellectuals, drawn from the Christian community and from the Marxist and Communist world, have engaged in discussion and found some basis for meaningful exploration of contemporary problems.

In his paper, "On the Necessity for Jewish-Marxist Dialogue," *Norman Levine* argues that the time has come for a similar meeting of Jewish and Marxist intellectuals in order to evolve a philosophy of hope and action in a day when despair and inaction have become widespread. In the course of his presentation, he offers a personal critique of thinkers like Richard Rubenstein and Emil Fackenheim, and is warmly appreciative of the contribution that the thought of Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber can make to such a dialogue.

Since the Editor is always committed to the idea of a free exchange of ideas, he finds himself sympathetic to the idea of Jewish religious thinkers and Marxist ideologists meeting for mutual discussion and enlightenment. He has only one reservation—the fear that what may be the goal and consequence will be a merger like that of the lion and the lamb.

Great Jewish Poetry in English

For the last forty years, North American Jewry, primarily in the United States, but also in Canada, has produced a substantial number of gifted writers who use the English language as their medium.

Perhaps through no fault of their own, the vast majority of these poets, novelists and critics have been alienated Jews with little or no knowledge of their Jewish heritage. One is, however, aware of the zeal with which they make themselves at home in various exotic cultures, far removed from home base. At best, these creative spirits have been indifferent, and at worst, hostile to their own people and its tradition.

Critics studying their works have been forced to dig for tiny clues to Jewish identification in their writing.

Only a handful of literary practitioners who knew and loved the Jewish roots of their being, have lived and worked on the North American continent. There come to mind such gifted writers as Ludwig Lewisohn and Maurice Samuel, both of whom were Contributing Editors to this journal, and *yibbadelu lehayyim* Elie Wiesel and Charles Reznikoff. Undoubtedly, a few additional names may be added from the present or past generation.

In this chosen group, the Canadian Jewish poet, A. M. Klein, who died recently, occupies a special place. For over forty years he created a body of poetry of rare excellence, scarcely equaled by any other poetic craftsman of our time. That English-speaking Jewry, both here and abroad, whose members are in the forefront of all movements for cultural achievement, have remained largely unaware of his poetry is a scandal and a disgrace.

The bulk of his poetry has now appeared in collected form. In his review-essay, "Abraham M. Klein's Poetic Heritage," *Jacob Kabakoff* surveys the poet's background, the theme of his concern and the quality of his poetic output. The essay should help to bring to Klein a measure of the recognition and appreciation which is his due, not merely as a Jew, but as a poet of true excellence.

R. G.

The Dreyfus Case: An Affair Without End

FREDERICK BUSI

THE RECENT AND ONGOING TRAUMAS ENDURED BY the American public in connection with Watergate often bore an uncanny resemblance to the most notorious political scandal of modern France. Columnist Paul Greenberg wrote: "The American Republic had been given back its own Dreyfus Case, courtesy of Gerald Ford, and there is no end of the ordeal in sight."

A point by point comparison between the two scandals would be tedious. But, with allowances made for certain basic differences, France, at the turn of this century, had to grapple with similar moral, political and human problems such as governmental duplicity, cover-ups, stupidity, and corruption.

Shortly before his death, the late President Pompidou confided to C. L. Sulzberger that Watergate resembled the type of confrontation between executive and legislators that had become endemic to French politics. And, in his recent book on the decline of America, Raymond Aron observed that "the Watergate affair is as specifically American as the Dreyfus affair was specifically French."¹ For the magnitude of crimes and issues at stake they belong to the same category of political ignominy.

Each country bears the stamp of its particular political vices. At the time of the Dreyfus affair the rest of the world watched dumbfounded while France tore itself to pieces over the fate of one officer wrongly condemned for treason. When the truth became known it still seemed difficult to grasp why it had taken so much effort and acrimony to establish justice. True, Dreyfus was vindicated, but the scars left on French society were so deep that you can still find Frenchmen who believe that Dreyfus was guilty of something or other, that the whole truth has never come out (it has not) and that the bitter struggle signaled (or caused) the decline of France's fortunes as a world power.

What, then, was the Dreyfus affair? To the casual observer it seemed like the temporary triumph of militarism and anti-Semitism which, in time, was beaten back by an aroused citizenry. And, from one angle, this vision is valid. But to students of the affair the details were much more convoluted and the human drama more complicated than a simple

1. Raymond Aron, *The Imperial Republic* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1974), ix.

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clash between right and wrong. Seen in retrospect, the affair was a rare opportunity to observe the workings of a reprobate regime exposed, like an overturned rock, to public scrutiny.

If for no other reason, the side-effects of the controversy helped establish new visions of society which have modified political behavior in the western democracies. The term "intellectual" was then used for the first time with the meaning which it still holds today; scholars, journalists and writers brought their energy and talents to bear on both sides of the conflict. Many were men of the left and their role in dabbling collectively in politics was deplored by some, but the precedent was established and it endures.

Zionism was another major development of the affair. The adventuresome Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl, had witnessed Dreyfus' degradation and the Paris mob screaming for vengeance against the Jews. He reasoned that if such hatred could erupt in the heart of European civilization, in its very capital, then there was little hope for Jews to assimilate peacefully. So began the long saga that led to the creation of the State of Israel.

For all the controversy that the Jewish question then aroused in France, it seems to have passed almost unnoticed during Watergate except, perhaps, on the very extreme right. John Ehrlichman's indignation at a newspaper article about his Jewish grandfather stands only as a very minor footnote. But, abroad, the nightmare of Watergate has been contradictorily attributed to such factors. The Soviet Union appears to accept the conspiracy theory that Nixon was driven from office by those forces most opposed to the policy of détente, peace and friendship. Certain sectors of the Arab press have been more to the point by denouncing a "Zionist plot" to depose Nixon and Kissinger who, they believe, were the best means for realizing their plans. On the other hand, the small fascist press in France maintains that Kissinger is a Zionist *éminence grise* bent upon usurping the office of the presidency. The journal expressing this view, *Lectures Françaises*, is the direct descendant of the newspaper, *La Libre Parole*, which might be considered the catalyst that initiated the Dreyfus affair in 1894.

Just before the turn of the century, France breathed a little easier in the course of its rivalry with Germany; it had recently signed a mutual defense pact with Russia, one of the first steps that was eventually to lead to the first World War. The negotiations had been brilliantly handled by General Charles le Mouton de Boisdeffre and there was much cause for rejoicing over the outflanking of Germany. Many Frenchmen, however, were annoyed at the prospect of the Third Republic, reputedly the most progressive of the major powers, aligning itself with the most reactionary one. But there were many more on the right who

found much to admire in Tsardom. Like Balzac forty years earlier, they appreciated the autocratic and Christian foundations of the Russian empire, and some even praised that government's anti-Semitic policies which caused the exodus of several hundred thousand Jews.

Most of the expelled Jews made their way to the United States, and they were hastily conducted through France by their nervous coreligionists who feared that if many remained behind their presence might attract the attention of the local anti-Semites. And it did. In Paris, a Jewish population of 500 in 1789 had grown to 40,000 by 1890. Their visibility and, more importantly, the rising tide of nationalism and xenophobia began to strain the fabric of society.

France was still smarting from its humiliating defeat in 1870 at the hands of the Prussians. Many citizens, particularly in the army—the country's most venerable institution—followed a policy of revanchism, awaiting the day when France would be strong enough to seize back its two lost provinces. In the feverish climate of militarism, the major antagonists spent much—too much, it would seem—of their energy on trying to outwit one another.

The stakes were high and the methods were deplorable: spies, counterspies, double, even triple, agents, ingenious schemes to outfox the enemy. The game was played in deadly earnest by both sides. Since France was the loser in 1870 it seemed to be the more insecure, nervous player. The top echelons of the French army had been harrassed by the right-wing press for alleged lack of vigilance and preparedness. The most merciless of these journals was the *Libre Parole*, which added the Jewish question to its accusations, condemning the policy of allowing Jews, especially as officers, to serve in the army.

In 1894, General Auguste Mercier was the war minister. His political beliefs were republican and were not allowed to interfere with his professional duties. Earlier that year he had compromised his career through poor decisions: he had rejected the offer of an innovation in explosives and the inventor publicly threatened to take his discovery to Germany. In August, the general ordered the release of 60,000 troops but, clumsily, he neglected to inform the Army Commission of the Senate and the President of the Republic. With the return of parliament in October, the prospects of Mercier's retaining his post were unfavorable. He would be pilloried in the Chamber and the press. He knew that he needed support and, above all, he needed to avoid any more bad publicity. The army saw itself besieged by critics and the war minister would have to bear the brunt of the criticism.

When Mercier had assumed control of the war office a year before he had been warned by a Colonel Sandherr, head of counter-espionage, that spies were to be found everywhere in Paris. Sandherr should have

known; it was his duty to evaluate information produced by his spy network. A native of Alsace, a convert to Catholicism and a convinced anti-Semite, Sandherr, like other officers of similar inclinations, was constantly on guard for the enemy.

Sandherr's section had engaged a cleaning woman in the German embassy to collect and deliver all papers found in the wastebasket in the office of the military attaché, Colonel Max von Schwartzkoppen. Since late 1892, it had been obvious that someone was selling secrets to the Germans, and it was the job of Major Joseph Henry of counterintelligence to gather and examine the filched material. At the end of September, Henry was astounded by one particular letter—to be known as the *bordereau*—that contained information on important military matters. He showed this latest catch to two colleagues and then to Sandherr and, on the following day, to Mercier, who almost panicked and instructed Sandherr and his staff to get to the bottom of the case—and fast.

The pilfered document was photographed and distributed to various bureaus for possible identification of the handwriting. In the office of communication and transportation, Colonel Fabre, a vociferous anti-Semite, reasoned that, to possess so much knowledge, the author must be a trainee. After studying the list of recent trainees, Fabre and his superior stopped at the name of Alfred Dreyfus. Fabre recalled Dreyfus from a previous encounter, had never liked the man and thought he was out of place in the army.

Their opinion traveled up the chain of command. After Sandherr heard the arguments, he, too, concurred. He turned to Boisdeffre who turned to Mercier, who agreed that Dreyfus seemed guilty of treason. Boisdeffre then turned the investigation over to his cousin, Major Du Paty de Clam, who studied the evidence and decided that there might be some grounds for pursuing the case. Du Paty de Clam, however, was cautious. His report was tentative, but his superiors, anxious to press on, took his opinions as a conclusive judgment.

Mercier was eager to settle the matter quickly. He recalled with apprehension that shortly before the *bordereau* was discovered he had overturned the conviction of an army physician who happened to be a Jew. He could not afford to let the jingoist press accuse him again of some high-handed intervention and, besides, catching a spy would put a feather in his cap.

But, to convict Dreyfus, solid proof would be needed. Mercier was told that the evidence was flimsy and that he would compromise himself if the case were not foolproof. The first graphologist to examine the letter was not fully convinced, but, with Mercier pressing for something certain, more experts were called in. They were told that there was other evidence against Dreyfus (untrue), that he was a Jew (true), and that time was running short (very true).

By the time Dreyfus had been summoned to appear on October 15 and was accused by fellow officers, he refused to confess and was held incommunicado in prison. For two crucial weeks a handful of officers tried to develop a more solid case against him, but with little success. Mercier rightly feared that the press would get hold of the story, as it did. Someone leaked the word that Dreyfus had been arrested and held, and, by the beginning of November, the headlines blared the story and demanded an explanation.

By now it was too late for Mercier, given his weak character, to backtrack. Whether innocent or not, Dreyfus would have to be found guilty in the interests of national security—and of Mercier's career. Mercier really believed Dreyfus to be guilty; he wanted that belief. His concern was infectious and his staff, realizing the serious nature of the case for the army's reputation, became more zealous than the minister of war. Once the story was out, counterintelligence intercepted and decoded a message from the Italian military attaché to his superior in Rome, merely asking if Dreyfus had any contact with the Italians. Major Henry, in charge of collecting evidence, took the first fatal step and, with Sandherr's approval, changed the wording of the message ever so slightly to suggest that Dreyfus might possibly have been in touch with Germany's ally. Mercier, with his one-track mind and in good faith, accepted the slightly altered telegram as further proof of the army's case against the unfortunate captain.

The nature of the additional evidence against Dreyfus was contained in a dossier full of gossip and hearsay compiled by one of the special agents hired by counterintelligence, an ex-policeman, François Guénée. This investigator reported that Dreyfus frequented sporting and literary circles and was in debt. Unfortunately, in his report Guénée had honestly and sloppily confused the captain with a well-known literary figure of the same name. And there was also a report that one Alfred Dreyfus was a Freemason, another favorite target of right wing forces ever vigilant in seeking out un-French activities.

It was doubly unfortunate that such stupid errors should have persisted. Dreyfus, the Freemason, was a merchant in Paris, and when the brother of the jailed captain, Mathieu Dreyfus, suggested that there might be a case of mistaken identity, the army refused to follow up the lead. It could be almost understandable why those officers who read the *Libre Parole* were susceptible to presuming Alfred Dreyfus guilty. That muckraking journal had made its reputation by attacking French Jews, not a few of whom were named Dreyfus. Even two years before the sensational arrest of 1894, the term "Dreyfus affair" had appeared in the *Libre Parole*, in reference to another person of the same name involved in a court case.

By the beginning of 1895 Dreyfus had been judged, found guilty and sent to Devil's Island. With Dreyfus banished to a penal colony, the general staff attempted to cover its traces and disperse the flimsy evidence used to obtain conviction. Mercier let it be known that, contrary to normal practice, he intended to keep the dossier of the trial in his office. He had good reason to do so, for by circulating the documents secretly and not showing them to the accused's counsel, the condemned man's rights had been violated. Therefore, Mercier burned his personal commentary on the case and instructed Sandherr to dispose of the evidence in the files. But Sandherr was thinking about the day when Mercier would no longer be his superior and when embarrassing questions might be raised about the case. Instead, he handed the file over to Henry for safe-keeping. After all, these were top secret documents and surely no one but Sandherr could possibly have access to them.

It was one of the delicious ironies of the case that Mercier outlasted Sandherr. In the following year, the head of counterintelligence died. But, even after death, Sandherr's spirit was contagious. In the most recent and thorough American study on the affair, David Lewis observes that

living in daily contact with paroled criminals, informers, double agents and impecunious aristocrats—all of them devoted to self-advancement by devious means—the rough and ready Colonel Sandherr not only perfected their techniques, he began to adopt their morality.²

Sandherr and Henry had set into motion the fatal machinery compromising all of their superiors who had trusted them and their highly questionable methods. In their attempt to get results at any cost the military caste and its many supporters had found themselves protecting an ever-descending, ever-widening circle of unscrupulous types. From the general staff down to petty forgers and police informers, all became enmeshed in their lies and dirty tricks until the edifice of public confidence later collapsed around them. The documents that were supposed to incriminate Dreyfus actually incriminated his accusers, but Mercier had no way of knowing that they would some day be used against the most respected group of men in France.

Shortly before his death in June 1895, Sandherr advised Henry "to feed" the Dreyfus dossier as a contingency measure which Henry could use in case of need. But Sandherr was not succeeded by Henry; he was replaced by Major Picquart, the man most responsible for having the case reopened, thus leading to Dreyfus' ultimate vindication. Picquart, a devout Catholic, did not care much for the Jews in general nor for Dreyfus in particular. He had been acquainted with the accused and, like many others, he had found him an unsympathetic type. Still, after the conviction, Picquart was a bit uneasy, since the evidence, so rumor had

2. David Lewis, *Prisoners of Honor* (New York: Morrow, 1973), p. 83.

it, was rather thin. But he reassured himself with the belief that the army's secret evidence must have been conclusive. In any event, Dreyfus was gone and the case was closed.

But the spying continued. In March, 1896, Picquart retrieved from the German embassy a small letter addressed to a Major Esterhazy. Immediately Picquart thought that he was on the trail of yet another spy and he began compiling evidence and information about Esterhazy. After examining a sample of the suspect's handwriting, Picquart vaguely recalled having seen it somewhere else before. Incredible though it seemed, Esterhazy's handwriting resembled that of Dreyfus, so Picquart inquired, discovered and examined the secret file that was never intended for his or anyone else's eyes.

Picquart was aghast. In his opinion, Esterhazy's writing and that in the incriminating *bordereau* seemed identical. The horrible realization now dawned that the wrong man had been sent to Devil's Island. Picquart's superiors were understandably uneasy about his discovery and, unfortunately for them, he was not of their caliber; he had nothing to hide and he believed that the army had an obligation to make amends before these findings became public knowledge. But the army, with all the power of the state behind it, thought otherwise. It tried every trick at its command to throw the inquisitive Picquart off the trail.

In his enthusiasm, Picquart revealed his Pandora's box to the new minister of war. When Boisdeffre learned of Picquart's initiative, he realized the full implications of making the secret file known outside the circle of the general staff. "But why wasn't it destroyed?" he exclaimed. If the dossier could not be eliminated, perhaps Picquart could be disposed of by a transfer to a dangerous colonial war.

With Picquart temporarily out of the way, Henry became acting chief of counterintelligence. To destroy the suspicions created by Picquart, Henry forged another document, properly backdated, purporting to identify beyond any doubt the complicity of Dreyfus with the Germans. It was passed on to his superiors who were eager for more evidence to bolster their case. Although Du Paty de Clam was wary of this convenient discovery, the rest of the general staff accepted it uncritically.

Once back in Paris, Picquart decided to write down all that he knew about the affair and he entrusted his letter—to be opened only in the event of his death—to his lawyer, Leblois. Leblois, however, revealed Picquart's findings to Auguste Scheurer-Kestner, the vice president of the senate. Although sworn to secrecy by Picquart's lawyer, the politician launched an independent investigation which threw the army into a panic. General Gonse prevailed upon Du Paty de Clam to go in female disguise to Esterhazy and to coach the real spy to give the proper answers to any investigators on his trail.

By now Paris was full of rumors about the miscarriage of justice.

The scandal soon became common knowledge but there seemed to be no way to make the army reverse its court martial decision or, at least, reconsider its case. The president of the senate slowly began to see the seemingly insurmountable wall thrown up around the question of Dreyfus. The army, the government, most of the press, even his old friends, were reluctant to consider reopening a case that might divide the nation. Only then did certain elements of the public realize the extent of the state's mammoth coverup campaign.

The public was now entering that phase of the affair that resembled a prolonged form of Chinese torture; every week seemed to bring forth new scandals and countercharges from the government. Picquart returned to Paris to face his superiors just at the time when *Le Figaro* published some highly compromising letters furnished by Esterhazy's mistress which dramatized the spy's violent frame of mind and his treachery towards France. Public indignation was widespread in important circles and now the army found itself being blackmailed by a common crook whom it had felt honorbound to protect in the name of national security.

When it became apparent that those who wanted Dreyfus to stay on Devil's Island were also the enemies of the liberals and leftists, the ranks of Dreyfus' supporters began to swell. But the army remained unshakable, though it was obliged to stage a show court martial of Esterhazy who was acquitted of all charges by friendly judges. The nationalist press that created the atmosphere that led to Dreyfus' conviction, hailed the acquittal of the real spy as a triumph of law and order.

But, just as the affair was launched by a press campaign, it was also brought to a head with one of the most sensational and bold episodes in the history of journalism. Emile Zola had slowly become attracted to the plight of Dreyfus. He had written articles in favor of the condemned captain, but to little avail. Then he brought the necessary shock to bear against the army to move the question off dead center. More than most of Dreyfus' defenders, Zola intuited the sort of forces that confronted them. The talent that unleashed a deluge of novels and pot boilers about contemporary French low life, was now turned against the real-life, sordid, weak types dominating government and army.

Thus, Zola's open letter, "*J'accuse*," which appeared on January 13, 1898 in Clemenceau's paper *L'Aurore*, brought the case to a head. Like other famous provocative documents, not all of the charges in Zola's masterpiece were entirely accurate or fair, but the moment was right; the bombshell was thrown and hit its mark.

While the army easily whitewashed the Esterhazy case, it was not to be completely successful in the matter of Zola. In his flamboyant attempt to force a retrial of Dreyfus, Zola offered himself first to pass before the

bar. "Let them dare to bring me to the court of appeals, and let there be an inquest in the full light of the day! I am waiting." He did not have to wait long. On February 7, 1898, Zola stood trial on the charge that he had wrongly accused the judges of the Esterhazy court martial. Though he was eventually found guilty, he forced the army's hand. While General de Pellieux was justifying the case against Zola, he began to reveal some of the mysterious secret evidence—Henry's forgeries—which the prosecution and other high officials had originally accepted in good faith and now preferred to conceal from public scrutiny for the sake of national security.

All France seemed divided by the succession of trials, newspaper duels, and acid recrimination. To put an end, once and for all, to the claims of Dreyfus' defenders, the war minister, Cavaignac, decided to make public the contents of the secret evidence. There was jubilation in the senate; the matter seemed almost over. The spirits of the Dreyfusards were at their lowest. The army felt triumphant enough to launch a smear campaign of insinuations on the question of Picquart's sexual habits and, to make the case ironclad, charges of spying were brought against him and his lawyer. The secret evidence was scrutinized in order to leave nothing to uncertainty.

To the dismay of the army, the officer selected to conduct the investigation, Captain Cuignet, revealed that the evidence was forged. In August, 1898, Henry was summoned to explain his activities before his embarrassed superiors. He protested his innocence, broke down and then admitted the obvious. This miserable underling confessed: "I acted solely in the interests of my country." He probably did, and in so doing he all but destroyed the very men whom he tried to protect, those who had instructed him to pursue relentlessly the battle against the enemy.

The word of Henry's arrest, followed by his suicide, touched off a new round of madness in France. The average Frenchman, worker or peasant, was not terribly interested by all of the fuss at the top; he only wished it would go away so that the country could get back to more important matters. But the leaders of society—politicians, journalists, academics and military—were flailing away at one another to such a degree that France seemed on the verge of a collective nervous breakdown. For some time the country had been so divided that the question of the guilt or innocence of Dreyfus became the national obsession, paralyzing activity at the highest levels. The *Times* of London observed:

This affair is beginning to affect business. The shops are suffering, timorous foreigners hasten their departure and postpone their arrival . . . foreign orders are falling off from a supposed uncertainty of punctual execution.

Crises abroad and domestic labor unrest added to the tension and general confusion. And if this were not enough, the president of the republic,

Félix Faure, died in the arms of his mistress at the Elysée palace. France was the laughing stock of Europe.

In 1899, the government was forced to grant Dreyfus a new trial and, despite all that had been revealed, once again he was found guilty. Under no circumstances would the army admit its mistakes. Even to many who were inclined to give the government the benefit of the doubt, the terrible truth had to be spoken. The Vicomte Eugène Melchior de Vogüé declared:

Today we have to bow to the evidence: our general staff has been dragged down by the deplorable moral standards of the times, by a false conception of military status, and has itself become entangled in a network of lies.³

World indignation was immediate. Demonstrations were organized everywhere to denounce the second condemnation of Dreyfus. In France, the government almost contemplated yet another trial but there was no chance that the army court would change its mind. There was only one, albeit imperfect, solution. As David Lewis writes:

The majority believed that the ideal dénouement was clemency for Dreyfus, a moratorium on debate and a general amnesty in time for the Paris Exposition.

Dreyfus recoiled at the thought of a solution that did not completely clear his name, but his brother's appeals prevailed and he accepted the pardon.

With the clemency granted to Dreyfus, the incident seemed once again closed. The immediate causes of the affair were settled—not to everyone's satisfaction—but the repercussions continued. Dreyfus' most intransigent enemies were outraged by the pardon, and they would claim for decades that his liberation was due to the new government infiltrated with radicals and atheists, that the truth would never be completely known and that, as far as they were concerned, the two condemnations (despite Esterhazy's confession) would be the last word. And even though the army might have committed an injustice, in their opinion that wrong was necessary and excusable.

Another strain of uneasiness came from the ranks of some of Dreyfus' supporters. One of his earliest defenders, the Catholic poet and socialist, Charles Péguy, coined the most memorable saying to emerge from all of these battles: "Everything begins in a mystique and ends up in politics. Founders come first, but the profiteers come after them." Péguy, the student-idealist, thought that the vindication of Dreyfus would cleanse France of governmental corruption. He was irritated by the Johnnies-come-lately, the socialists, anticlericals, journalists (many of whom were compromised in the Panama scandals) who were more bent

3. Ibid., p. 239.

on using Dreyfus as a stick with which to beat down their political enemies.

Péguy's fears were soon realized. Dreyfus himself had nothing to do with what was being done in his name. Heady with victory, his more radical defenders decided to play the game of politics as usual; they organized a systematic campaign to drive from power those elements which, they felt, had organized the anti-Dreyfus movement. The first to feel this new strength was the Catholic church. Though many of their enemies (but not all) were practicing Catholics and the church, through its silence, did little to dissociate itself from these elements, it was assumed that anticlericalism would rid France of their influence. Laws were passed to close down church schools and large numbers of priests and nuns were driven into exile. Members of one group, for example, the Assumptionist Fathers, who were rabidly anti-Dreyfusard, were banished to the United States where they founded Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The campaign culminated in the separation of church and state and with the scandal known as the case of the Index Cards. The new minister of war had organized an intelligence network with information supplied by faithful Freemasons to keep a file system that classified officers according to their religious or non-religious practices. This and other outrages tarnished whatever moral advantage was enjoyed by the triumphant Dreyfusards.

Gradually, however, the controversy began to fade in the public eye. Attention was now focused on the coming conflict with Germany. Rabid nationalists claimed that France had been so demoralized that Germany could not resist its attack in 1914. But this seems surely an exaggeration. The performance of the French army (ably assisted by the rest of the world) was superb, as compared with the dismal defeats of 1870 and 1939.

The war was over and the following decade witnessed a rare example of national solidarity. But the depression and the rise of Hitler strained social bonds and the same old sides regrouped again for a final confrontation. Finally, the Stavisky scandals exploded in 1934 in the worst social unrest since the affair forty years earlier. Alain Resnais's latest movie, with Jean-Paul Belmondo cast as the Jewish swindler, Stavisky, is a testimony to France's lasting curiosity over the affair.

When the Third Republic caved in to Hitler's blitzkrieg, an ultra-nationalist regime was installed, led by war hero Marshall Philippe Pétain, whose government of the French State repealed most of the republican tradition that the Dreyfusards had struggled to protect. Those who suffered most were the Jews and those who were branded outcasts by the new order. Even before the Germans made a single request, the

new French government offered to hand over its Jews, including children, to the Nazi extermination machine. In this way, 100,000 Jews and 100,000 social undesirables were deported and murdered, with the blessing and help of the French government. After the Liberation, many collaborationists were summarily shot and many more stood trial. One of the most famous, the reactionary intellectual and monarchist, **Charles Maurras**, when he learned of his sentence, shouted: "This is the revenge of Dreyfus."

It would be utterly misleading to think of France as a land totally obsessed by the Dreyfus affair. Perhaps writers have attributed too much to that massive split in public opinion and policy that began eighty years ago. But interest in the affair never seems to wane. Every year sees the publication of new studies and even fictional works inspired by the affair.

Some of the recent spin-off theories are quite exotic. One holds that the crisis was sparked by rivalry within French intelligence services and another maintains that France was deliberately misled by German counterintelligence, charges which eerily resemble the speculations of Charles Colson about alleged CIA vindictiveness directed against the Nixon administration. Unfortunately, there is no proof to sustain these subplots, but they do focus on the imaginative rationalizations produced by major governmental scandals and they should provide a rich field of investigation for future psychohistorians.

The "Dreyfus affair" is a blanket term covering a long series of outrages. While it started with the condemnation of an innocent individual, the aspect that really fired public opinion was the massive cover-up campaign. It is precious little comfort to believe that such goings-on are not unusual in most of the countries of this world. They can happen only in countries run by timorous, weak-minded, insecure government officials. But there may be some solace in the observation that they can be exposed only among a people that still believes in its original revolutionary principles and supports a vigorous independent press.

Yet, without the extraordinary good luck of the preserved incriminating evidence, the honor of Picquart and the journalism of Zola, Dreyfus would still be on Devil's Island. Strangest irony of all: the secrets delivered by Esterhazy were not so secret or valuable after all. When passions subsided somewhat, he thought it ludicrous that such relatively uninteresting information could have triggered such a tempest, that the government destroyed itself for no good reason. Thus, the words of Count Oxenstern, the eighteenth century chancellor of Sweden are more pertinent than ever: "If only you knew by what stupid people the world is governed."

A Basis For Morals: Ethics in a Technological Age

ROBERT GORDIS

The Moral Crisis of Our Times

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, EACH GENERATION HAS derived a melancholy satisfaction from believing that it was living in the most dangerous of times. Nevertheless, our age may well claim to be the era of multiple crises. Every nation is confronted by towering problems, both foreign and domestic, embracing all aspects of its life,—political, economic, social and cultural.

In America, the breakdown of accepted norms of conduct has brought us to the brink of ethical nihilism. This judgment does not assume that earlier traditional values were necessarily ideal, only that their erosion has left a vacuum that is not being filled. The catalogue of catastrophe is awesome—the widespread corruption in government, public service, business and academic life; the irruption of violence, not only in the cities but in the countryside; the drug and drink culture; the deterioration of education, the collapse of accepted standards of personal and family morality in favor of instant gratification; the escalating polarization of economic, ethnic and racial groups; and the legitimization of lying and cheating on all levels of society. All but destroyed today are such antiquated notions as the sense of the common weal, the concept of professional conduct, the notion of *noblesse oblige*. To cite a relatively minor instance, the relation between the ideal of sportsmanship and the practice of sports has almost disappeared. Sport in America today is an amalgam of boundless greed and limitless brutality that are the staples of the sporting pages and the sports newscasters.

Americans are confronted today by the most far-reaching challenge to their way of life, for which they are ill-prepared, having little more than widespread cynicism and pseudo-sophistication in their armamentarium of defense. And, since the “Americanization” of the world is proceeding apace, the disease is world-wide.

If we wished one word to describe the temper of the age it would be “lawlessness.” Fundamentally, the crisis facing our time is not social, economic, political, racial, ethnic or religious, but moral, the collapse of ethical values. Today, there is more crime and more corruption than in the past, or so we think. But the difference is not quantitative, it is qualitative. It is the erosion of standards which were previously recog-

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nized as binding, not only by the law-abiding majority, but also by the law-violating minority. The intent of La Rochefoucauld's famous epigram, "Hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to the virtue,"¹ was ironic, but it contained a basic truth not intended by the author. The hypocrite is himself a moralist *manqué*, who accepts the standards he is violating. Today there is less and less need felt for hypocrisy. The loss of ethical norms threatens the very survival of society, because the system of values is the cement which keeps the structure together, without which it is bound to fall apart. As a result, each group fights for what it can possibly secure for itself, with no pretense of concern for the general welfare. The absence of values brings in its wake a loss of a sense of direction and of hope for the future. The quest for values is, therefore, the most fundamental enterprise in which we can possibly engage. To be sure, the adoption by society of a consensus on ethical values will not, *ipso facto*, reduce wrong-doing and raise the moral tone of society. What is clear is that some structure is a pre-requisite for any significant improvement in the ethical climate of our time.

Religion As a Basis For Ethics

There is, of course, one familiar and easily accessible body of ethical doctrine available. I refer to the corpus of acts and attitudes which is subsumed somewhat loosely and inaccurately under the rubric of the Judeo-Christian tradition,² which has dominated Western civilization for nearly two millenia, and which maintains that its ethical code is divinely revealed and, hence, is obligatory upon man. Its basic attitudes on sex, love and the family, truth and responsibility, justice and mercy, fair-play and the sense of honor, are still officially normative in Western society, but they are in rapid dissolution around us. Astronomers tell us that there are stars millions of light-years away which may have long since disintegrated, but their rays still continue to travel toward the earth until they finally become extinct. Modern man has continued to walk by the light of the faith of earlier generations, but for many of our con-

1. Maxim no. 218.

2. The validity of the concept is assumed in such works as Morris S. Lazaron, *Common Ground* (New York, 1939); S. S. Cohon and H. F. Rall, *Christianity and Judaism Compare Notes* (New York, 1927); Louis Finkelstein, S. Eliot Ross, and W. A. Brown, *Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism in Creed and Life* (New York, 1943). Its reality has been denied by Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, *Judaism and Christianity—The Differences* (New York, 1943); A. H. Silver, *Where Judaism Differed* (New York, 1956), and, more recently, by Arthur A. Cohen, *The Myth of The Judeo-Christian Tradition* (New York, 1972). For a discussion of the subject, see the interchange between Paul Tillich, who defended the concept (in *JUDAISM*, 1 (April, 1952): 106–109 and Bernard Heller, who opposed it (*Ibid.*, 1 (July, 1952): 257–61). An analysis of the contents and the limits of the idea is presented in R. Gordis, *Judaism In A Christian World* (New York, 1966), pp. 149–180.

temporaries the original star has been extinguished and the last rays of light are reaching us before total darkness falls.

If modern society were prepared to accept a dogmatic basis for an ethical code, it would restore the ballast of *'ith din v'ith dayyan*, "There is a Judge and there is judgment," which would serve as the basis for obedience to the moral code and for punishment for its violation. But the likelihood of such a universal conversion is minimal. The secular spirit has penetrated every area of society and every level of thought, so that a simplistic faith is possible today for fewer and fewer modern people. Moreover, even believers in God are not necessarily prepared to accept any given law code as divinely revealed. Many religious believers would insist on the right and the duty to interpret past traditions and they would invoke history to justify development and change in ethics, as everywhere else.

But ideological considerations aside, there is one over-riding pragmatic fact. For vast numbers of modern men, if not for the majority, a dogmatic basis for ethics is no longer tenable. The commandments "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" can no longer suffice as a basis for ethical conduct because either apodictic statement at once calls forth the response, "Why?" Whether we applaud the fact or deplore it, religion *per se* cannot supply an adequate rationale for an ethical code for twentieth century man.

Science As a Rationale for Ethics

Is there another, more consensual basis available for an ethical system in the modern age? The one answer which immediately comes to mind is science, whose extraordinary discoveries have revolutionized our understanding of the world. Moreover, the fruits of science in the technological realm have transformed the conditions of man's existence more radically during the twentieth century than in the millenium preceding. It is no wonder, therefore, that the call has gone up in many quarters for a "scientific ethic." This would seem to be a highly attractive option, particularly since the values of science are universally recognized and appropriated by every type of social, political and economic system.

In the face of the basic significance of science in the modern world, I venture to suggest, nevertheless, that science cannot create the content of a moral system or even supply a rationale for one. The reason is inherent in the very nature of the scientific enterprise. There is only one commandment in the scripture of science, "Thou shalt not lie."³ Science must seek to tell the truth without fear or favor. It has both the duty and

3. It is entirely comprehensible that this negative precept occurs in the Holiness Code (Lev. 19:11) in a social, rather than in an intellectual context.

the right to explore every aspect of reality—the reality of the universe and the reality of man—and to attempt to establish the facts as they are. This is the only commandment in science.

In a stimulating lecture “The Ethical Basis of Science,” delivered under the auspices of Technion,⁴ Professor H. Bentley Glass suggests three ethical values that are essential to science: freedom of expression, willingness to acknowledge the truth, including one’s own error, and a sense of community, which is possible only if communication is open with all other scientific researchers. Now, these three principles are *necessary conditions* for the ideal functioning of the scientific enterprise, but they are not *sufficient* to serve as a rationale for a free and just society. From the purview of science, it is unnecessary to include such ideals as human equality, personal freedom, social justice and compassion for the weak, basic though they are for a worthwhile ethical system.

Moreover, in our own day, we have seen societies that have substantially suppressed even these values that have been proposed as constituting the ethical basis of science and yet they have succeeded in cultivating scientific research with at least a fair measure of success. Such totalitarian regimes as Nazi Germany and Communist Russia are cases in point.

Once science has given us the truest description of reality of which it is capable, its authentic task is done. It is not within the power of science to determine what ought to be done with that information. The scientist who engages in atomic fission is engaged in a legitimate scientific enterprise. Whether society will use it to build an atomic bomb and destroy lives, or whether it will use it for research in cancer is not, strictly speaking, the domain of science at all.

An obvious distinction that has frequently been drawn declares that science, *qua* science, is concerned with the real world as it is; ethics with man and society as they should be. Science deals with facts; ethics with values. In a word, science is morally neutral and must remain so if it is to be true to its functions. But this limitation applies to “science,” not to “scientists.” Obviously, scientists, being human beings of intelligence, sensitivity and social concern, have their attitudes and their points of view on all of these questions of values and goals. We may go further. Possessing greater capacity than the generality of men, scientists have a correspondingly greater responsibility to have their views made known and made effective. But when they do so, they function as citizens, not as scientists. Decision-making in the realm of public policy is not the province of science.

4. Haifa, 1969.

The Place of Technology

How does technology relate to the issue? Technology, the application of science to practical goals, occupies a middle ground between science and ethics. If science is the pursuit of truth and ethics the quest for the good, technology may be described as the search for the useful. Ideally, technology attempts to utilize the truths of science for the advancement of the good of society; but this holds true only ideally, not in practice. Since society is not a monolithic unity, complex questions arise as to whose good is being sought—that of the Aryan race or of the Russian proletariat or of the white European worker or of the mammoth American corporation or of the South African Negro or of the sex whom men, with characteristic modesty, used to call the weaker one.

In rare instances, but these are of the greatest importance, the issue of whose benefit is being sought may involve the entire human race. Shall technology advance the interests of one super-power as against another at the risk of obliterating mankind, or shall technology refuse to place the interests of any group,—political, economic or ethnic,—above that of the preservation of the human species itself?

The decision as to which particular project, in applied science or technological exploration, is to be undertaken is a moral decision; the major responsibility falls upon society and its foci of power. But the technologist who has the option of participating or refusing to participate is also morally involved. Hence, the soul-searching of workers on the atomic bomb since Hiroshima is entirely comprehensible.

The relationship of technology vis-à-vis science and ethics may be put slightly differently. The method of technology is derived from science, but its goal, the benefit of society, however that term is defined, *is derived from an already existing ethical system*. These ethical values were not generated by technology; technology gives its allegiance to them, either implicitly or explicitly, by the character of its activity.

The Contribution of Science to Ethics

The autonomy of science as against ethics is basic, but the dichotomy between them is not absolute. In several significant respects, science makes highly important, indeed indispensable, contributions to the search for ethical values. To the extent that it describes the world in which man lives, it helps to delimit the environment within which we can make ethical demands upon man. It is to science, and science alone, free and untrammelled, that we must look for an accurate picture of the natural resources of the planet which man inhabits, its mineral riches and its supply of air, water and space which man must husband carefully if he is not to perish. It thus supplies the raw material for ecological ethics, man's proper attitude toward his habitat.

Equally important is the role of the life-sciences, both biological and psychological, which help us to understand the nature of man, his capacities and his limitations. A viable ethical system must be governed, of necessity, both by the limitations set by the natural universe, as well as by the attributes with which man is endowed. In indicating what cannot be expected of man or of his natural environment, the contribution of science is invaluable; when it is ignored the consequence is disaster.

Science makes a third, highly important contribution to ethics. By its very nature, science is a dynamic enterprise, constantly engaged in extending the borders of its knowledge and in modifying previously accepted positions. It stimulates, therefore, an openness to new ideas, a willingness to surrender outmoded notions, and a sense of humility before the unknown. These qualities are badly needed to jolt man out of the comfortable, fixed and immovable positions to which he grows accustomed with time. The momentum of scientific progress is virtually the only remedy for the inertia of intellectual sloth.

Nor is this all. If, as science conclusively demonstrates, man's picture of the universe and his relationship to it is in constant flux, it follows that the system of values that man erects upon the sub-structure must also partake of this dynamic quality. This is not to suggest that every new scientific discovery requires a complete transformation of man's world-view. Yet it is undeniable that major discoveries, such as those of Copernicus, Darwin and Freud, imperiously demand, and ultimately bring about, far-reaching revolutions in man's world-view and his ethical system.

In sum, science supplies the indispensable prerequisites for an ethical system. But the system of values for the individual and society cannot be found in science, *per se*. Science can help tell us how to get where we want to go, but it cannot tell us where we ought to go.

It seems clear, therefore, that in this age of dissolving traditions we cannot find a basis for an acceptable ethical system in any specific religious tradition, if only because of the varieties of belief and unbelief rampant in the modern world. But neither can science supply this critical lack because of its own essential nature.

Natural Law—Its Origin and History

Is there any other possibility of achieving a reasonably comprehensive consensus of ideas to serve as a basis for an ethical system for our times? I should like to propose the potentialities of "natural law" for filling this role. This is not to suggest that the "natural law" doctrine in its traditional forms can serve us today. We need to re-examine the history of natural law and the characteristics it has exhibited in the past,

in order to create a new concept of natural law, broader and more dynamic than past formulations and, therefore, more serviceable in the present and future.⁵

There are three principal periods in the history of the doctrine. It is significant that natural law arose during a period spiritually not unlike our own, during the breakdown of the fabric of classical civilization. Toward the close of the ancient world, the religious and mythical world-view of Greco-Roman civilization dissolved, no longer commanding the allegiance of intelligent and sensitive men. Nevertheless, many of them felt the need for an ethical base for their personal lives and the governance of society. Largely under the aegis of Stoicism, an ethical code evolved which flowered into the doctrine of natural law.

The doctrine was much more fully elaborated in the Middle Ages, when scholastic philosophers, seeking to give a rational basis to the teachings of traditional religion and ethics, spelled out its implications with great subtlety. From that day to this, natural law has been cultivated with great assiduity in Catholic theological circles, but in modern times its influence upon the body politic in general has been minimal. In part, the modern distaste for natural law is due to its linkage with a specific dogmatic system. In perhaps greater degree, natural law absorbed from its scholastic cultivators certain traits that made it seem irrelevant to modern concerns.

Western civilization encountered another era akin to our own during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With the break-up of the feudal system and the breakdown of the medieval world-view came the emergence of national states, each of which asserted its total sovereignty vis-à-vis all others. Some doctrine was needed to govern the relationships of states, and international law came into being, representing a secular adaptation of doctrines derived from natural law.

The Industrial Revolution and the rise of a middle-class led to the demand for individual human rights, which also required a theoretical foundation. The new economic order needed to break the rigid patterns of feudal society and to grant equality to all men without regard for their lineage, religion or economic position. The new mercantile and industrial entrepreneurs demanded freedom from external restraints in the development of burgeoning capitalism. Thus, there arose the ideals embodied in the slogans of the French Revolution—Liberty, Fraternity, Equality. Though these ideals were never completely translated into reality and the banners of the French Republic and Napoleon did not usher in the Messianic Age for humanity, they did mark a great step forward in human liberation.

5. See the symposium volume edited by John Cogley, *Natural Law and Modern Society* (Cleveland-New York, 1963).

Natural law, in secularized form, was now pressed into service once more, producing the classical political documents of the eighteenth century, the American *Declaration of Independence* and the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man*. They mark the apogee of the natural law doctrine in secularized form. But this secularization was far from complete. There was no acceptance of a *specific* creedal formulation, to be sure, but reliance upon a "Creator" was expressed in the American document. It declared that "all men have been *created* equal and have been endowed *by their Creator* with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and expressed "a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence."

During the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, natural law reached its nadir. In the modern era, it has been generally regarded as a quaint survival of Greco-Roman thought and of medieval scholasticism, and dismissed as totally irrelevant to modern man and his condition. During these last few centuries, the natural law doctrine has remained almost exclusively the province of the Catholic Church. This situation seemed entirely appropriate, in view of the widely assumed tendency of the church to glorify medievalism in all of its forms.

The Basic Traits of Natural Law

The low repute in which natural law has generally been held in the modern world is not due merely to its associations. It is undeniable that through the greater portion of its history, natural law has manifested a conservative bias. Rarely have its advocates or practitioners been found on the frontiers of ethical thought. Historically, natural law has been far more in evidence as a limiting and restraining factor in human activity than as a liberating principle making for growth and development. As Robert M. Hutchins has noted, natural lawyers have been more active in defining "a just war" than in furthering disarmament or a new conception of sovereignty.

But this characteristic is not necessarily inherent in natural law. I would suggest that the reason why natural law has tended to be "static" in its application lies in its cultural origins, in the two periods in which it arose and in which it reached its highest development. The Greco-Roman world saw life as unchanging and human history as cyclical and repetitive. And it was classical civilization that fathered natural law. The Middle Ages, in which natural law reached its apogee, were also marked by a static conception of life. To be sure, the Jewish and Christian religions looked forward to a divine intervention in human affairs, but only at "the end of days," which was taken to mean "beyond history." On the other hand, in this temporal world, here and now, medieval thought had little conception of change and growth. The feudal system,

with its permanent stratification of classes, gave expression to this static view in the social and political order.

Natural law necessarily took on the coloration of these two periods, which saw its gestation and its maturity. From these eras it derived its bias in favor of the static, the unchanging, the immovable.

But if we rethink its postulates, natural law can serve as a consensual basis for an ethical system for our time. As we have pointed out elsewhere, natural law needs to be saved from its friends in order to convince its foes. In order to safeguard its vital essence and free it from the accidental entanglements wrought by history, we need to recognize that the assumed sources of natural law have been too narrowly construed. Actually, they are not limited to the Greco-Roman world. Another culture-sphere, that of the Hebraic tradition, supplies precisely the element of dynamism which the static Greco-Roman world-view did not possess.

John Cogley has defined natural law as "simply the belief that there is a moral order or ethical order which a human being can discover and which he must take account of, if he is to attune himself to his necessary ends as a human being."⁶ Basically, the postulates of natural law deal with *human nature*, with *law* and with *reason*, and with their interrelationships. Unfortunately, advocates of natural law in the past have treated human nature as *unchangeable*, *uniform* and *totally known*. More than a little of the difficulty stems from these assumptions. Inherently, however, there is nothing in natural law that negates the exploration of the dimensions of human nature as an ongoing and probably unending enterprise.

Essentially, natural law declares that only that law is legitimate and has a claim upon men's loyalty which is *in harmony with human nature*. Second, it believes that human nature is *constant* through time, not necessarily unchanging, but with sufficient continuity to make possible generalizations regarding its basic traits, its needs and desires, its limitations and potentialities. Third, it regards human nature as being *universal* in space, modified, to be sure, by environmental factors, but still sufficiently stable to permit a generalized theory applicable to all men. Finally, it regards human nature not as known but as *knowable* through the canons of scientific investigation and rational thought.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several Christian scholars, such as Hugo Grotius, recognized that a fundamental source of natural law was to be found in the Biblical tradition. The Cambridge Hebraist, John Selden, was convinced that a doctrine of natural law is explicitly set forth in the Talmudic concept of the "Noahide Laws," which rests upon Biblical foundations. He devoted a work to the theme, *De Jure Naturale et Gentium Juxta Disciplinam Ebraeorum* (1655). The

6. Ibid., p. 19.

distinguished legal scholar, Max M. Laserson, of Columbia University, was working on the subject at the time of his lamented passing two decades ago.

The intervening years have been marked by a global collapse of morality on every front. The need for a sound basis for ethics grows increasingly clear and increasingly desperate. In this important task, Judaism has a significant contribution to make toward a revitalized and dynamic concept of natural law.

In seeking ethical principles that will be binding and universal upon all men and societies, it would be difficult to improve upon the Ten Commandments given on Sinai. The Decalogue (Exodus, chap. 20; Deuteronomy, chap. 5) may be viewed as an unsophisticated adumbration of natural law, with its apodictic commands, all regarded as self-evident and requiring no justification. The last six commandments are exclusively concerned with man's relations with his fellows. The Fourth Commandment, on the Sabbath, is given a cosmic-religious motivation in Exodus, (a memorial of Creation), but an ethico-social justification in Deuteronomy, (a recollection of Egyptian bondage). Only the first three Commandments are "theological" in content, yet even here the implications are significant. As the medieval poet and thinker, Judah Halevi, pointed out in another connection, the First Commandment proclaims: "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage," not "who created heaven and earth."⁷ God introduces Himself as the great Liberator in the first recorded revolution in history, thus taking His place on the side of the oppressed. The Second prohibits the making of images of the Godhead and, thus, effectively opposes defining and limiting the cosmic source of the universe. The cryptic Third Commandment apparently forbids associating the Name of God with anything false or unworthy. What is almost as notable about the Decalogue as its inclusions are its omissions. Unlike such ancient documents as the Egyptian "Protestations of Guiltlessness," the Decalogue is almost completely ethical in emphasis.

The Golden Rule in Leviticus, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," follows the prohibition of taking vengeance or nursing a grudge (Lev. 19:18). It is then explicitly applied to the alien as well, "You shall love him as yourself, for you were slaves in the land of Egypt" (19:34). Both the Decalogue and the Holiness Code offer no detailed theological doctrine. They do presuppose faith in one God, ruler of a universe rooted in righteousness.

The prophet Micah formulates a three-fold categorical imperative. It is addressed by God to man (*Adam*), be it noted, not to the Israelite

7. *Cuzari*, Book 1, par. 25.

alone, "to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (7:6).

That the code of ethical conduct is not limited to gross offenses is clear from the impressive, though less familiar, "Code of Integrity," spoken by the suffering Job (Job, chap. 31), in which he sets forth the norms of conduct by which he has lived. Job lists fourteen subtle sins from which he, himself, has been free: (1) lusting for a maiden (vv. 1, 2), (2) cheating in business (vv. 5, 6), (3) taking the property of others (vv. 7, 8), (4) engaging in adultery (vv. 9-12), (5) acting unfairly toward slaves in the courts (vv. 13-15), (6) showing callousness toward the poor (vv. 16-18), (7) manifesting lack of pity for the wayfarer (vv. 19, 20), (8) perverting the just claims of the widow and the orphan (vv. 21-23), (9) loving gold and trusting in one's wealth (vv. 24-25), (10) worshipping the sun and the moon (vv. 26-28), (11) finding joy in the calamity of his foes (vv. 29-31), (12) failing to practice hospitality (v. 32), (13) concealing his sins because of the fear of mob opinion (vv. 33, 34), and (14) expropriating of land of others within the letter of the law (vv. 38-40). Only one, the worship of heavenly bodies, is "theological"; the others are all infractions of right relations with one's fellow-men.

Biblical thought rarely formulates abstract doctrines. The first explicit doctrine of natural law is set forth in the Apocryphal Book of Jubilees, which was written before the beginning of the Christian era. It attributes to Noah, who was not a Hebrew, a code of conduct binding upon all men:

In the twenty-eighth jubilee, Noah began to enjoin upon his sons' sons the ordinances and commandments and all the judgments that he knew and he exhorted his sons to observe righteousness and to cover the shame of their flesh and to bless their Creator and honor father and mother and love their neighbor and guard their souls from fornication and uncleanness and all iniquity. (Jubilees 7:22)⁸

The Talmud explicitly declares that all men, by virtue of their humanity, are obligated to observe fundamental principles of conduct, which it calls "the Seven Laws of the Sons of Noah." Six of these basic Noahide Laws are negative, the prohibition of idolatry, murder, incest, theft, blasphemy, and cruelty to animals, and one is positive, the establishment of law and order in society (B. *Sanhedrin* 56a-60a; *Tosefta Avodah Zarah* 8:4-8).

The New Testament seems to refer to the Noahide Laws in one passage (Acts 15:20):

We should write to them to abstain from the pollutions of idols and from unchastity and from what is strangled and from blood.

and later, in the same chapter,

8. See R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the O.T.* (Oxford, 1913), Vol. 2, p. 24.

You abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts 15:29)

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul explicitly refers to the doctrine of natural law as the endowment of all men, in his statement:

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another. (Romans 2:15-15)

The Rabbinic doctrine of the Noahide Laws makes ethical conduct, rather than creedal adherence, obligatory upon all men. It is, therefore, a code of law rather than a system of belief which it enjoins. Yet though the Noahide Laws have only minimal theological content, they are by no means lacking as a metaphysical foundation. The Seven Laws include the prohibition of idolatry and of blasphemy and, therefore, rest upon the recognition of a divine Creator and Governor of the world.

Among medieval thinkers, this doctrine of the Noahide Laws merged imperceptibly with that of natural law in the Middle Ages, as in the work of Bahya ibn Paqudah, the most popular Jewish moral philosopher of the Middle Ages (eleventh century, Spain). Before him, the tenth century philosopher, Saadia, influenced by the concept of natural religion (*fitra*) maintained by the Arab Kalam philosophers, virtually identified the truths of divine revelation with those achievable by human reason. Leo Strauss has shown that Judah Halevi equates the law of reason, which underlies all codes, with the law of nature.⁹ On the Christian side, John Selden, who identified the Noahide Laws with natural law, represented the effort of the natural law school in the period of the Enlightenment to establish points of contact with the Hebraic tradition. However, as has already been noted, in the last few centuries, the Greco-Roman source of natural law has continued to be cited, while the Hebraic element has tended to be ignored.

Jewish Sources For Natural Law

The sources already cited do not exhaust the potential contribution that the Jewish tradition, both Biblical and Rabbinic, can make to a new and evolving body of natural law that will reckon with the realities of human nature, its needs, aspirations and limitations, and be in conformity with reason.

In presenting, however cursorily, these insights of the Jewish tradition as significant expressions of an evolving body of natural law, it is clear that a substratum of religious faith underlies them. Its basic

9. Cf. his *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, 1955).

postulates are: (1) the recognition of a law-abiding universe, not merely in the physical realm, which science has continued to reveal, but also in the social order, which is governed by the law of retribution or moral consequence, imbedded in the very structure of the world;¹⁰ (2) the faith that this universe is hospitable to man's aspirations; and (3) the conviction that all men are the creation of a power beyond themselves and, by that token, are brothers.

Undoubtedly, there will be conscientious and sensitive men and women who will be honestly unable to subscribe even to so broadly based a system of belief. But I believe that for the overwhelming majority of men and women, whether they give their allegiance to a specific religious tradition or to none, and whether they are scientists, technologists, or laymen, such a basis for ethical standards would be acceptable. It should be possible, therefore, to construct a viable system of ethical standards for our age.

It must rest upon a foundation firmer than convention or predilection or the police power of the state. It must avoid the weaknesses of relativism without succumbing to the temptations of dogmatic absolutism. Only then can it help to extricate man from the chaos, the confusion and the conflict which threaten his survival.

We can call attention only briefly to some salient Jewish insights; (a) the nature of man, (b) man's relation to society, (c) man's relation to the environment, (d) the prophetic philosophy of history, and (e) the shape of the future.

The Nature of Man

The opening chapter of Genesis describes the creation of man through a striking and richly suggestive metaphor:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created them. (Gen. 1:27)

What is an image? By definition, an image bears a strong resemblance to the original, but it is always less than the original. The metaphor must mean that in man, on a small scale, we may find those qualities which exist in God on a transcendental and infinite scale. The commentators and philosophers have proposed varied interpretations of "the image of God." All relate the metaphor to some element of uniqueness in man wherein he differs from other creatures, to whom the phrase is not applied. Obviously, it would not relate to man's physical constitution.

10. A fuller explication of the writer's view of this fundamental article of faith may be found in R. Gordis, *A Faith For Moderns*, revised and augmented edition (New York, 1971), esp. chapters VI and VII, and *The Book of God and Man—A Study of Job* (Chicago, 1965), chaps. X and XI.

According to The Wisdom of Solomon and Nahmanides, "the image of God" refers to the gift of immortality bestowed upon man. According to Philo, Ibn Ezra and probably the majority of commentators, it represents the gift of reason, which carries with it the power that man has to make a free choice, an attribute lacking, so far as we know, in any other creature. Saadia relates the phrase to its immediate context and interprets it to mean that man has dominion over the rest of creation. In modern terms, man has the power to control and modify his environment, for good or for ill.

It is the very essence of a metaphor that its connotations are far wider than its denotations, so that the phrase may, therefore, be interpreted in a more inclusive sense. If the outstanding attribute of God is His creative activity, man possesses this same capacity, though on a much more restricted scale. It is man's creativity that, according to the first and greatest commentary ever written on the first chapter of Genesis, the unforgettable Eighth Psalm, makes him "only a little lower than God."

However the phrase is understood, "the image of God" must include the gift of reason, which means the capacity to consider alternatives and to choose between them. This moral freedom is the basis of man's responsibility for his actions without which society cannot exist. In other words, *reason as an intellectual concept is the equivalent of freedom in the moral sphere and of responsibility in the social realm.*

This equation raises the age-old crux of man's free-will versus God's foreknowledge, which has never been perfectly solved and may be insoluble. Let it be noted that this ancient problem actually transcends the boundaries of theological discourse. Even the non-believer is confronted by the paradox of causation versus freedom. Many solutions for this dilemma have been proposed by philosophers, scientists and religious thinkers. They run the gamut, from the total denial of the reality of freedom, in Calvin's doctrine of predestination and Spinoza's description of freedom as an illusion, to various attempts to accommodate both concepts. I, myself, have not been guiltless in this regard.¹¹

Probably the wisest procedure is that of Rabbi Akiba, who boldly takes hold of both horns of the paradox and declares, "All is foreseen, yet free will is given."¹² Sixteen centuries later, the English writer, Samuel Johnson, unconsciously echoed Akiba's dictum when he said, "With regard to free will, all philosophy is against it and all experience is for it."

But whatever solution we adopt—even if it be none—Judaism, from its inception, has held fast to the doctrine of man's freedom and man's

11. Cf. *A Faith For Moderns*, chap. XIII, esp. pp. 207–208.

12. Mishnah, *Avot* 3:15.

responsibility. No less than three times, Deuteronomy emphasizes the freedom of choice before man: "Life and death I place before you this day, the blessing and the curse. May you choose life, so that you may live, you and your offspring (Deut. 30:19; cf. also 11:25; 30:15).

Irrespective of philosophic and scientific problems that may arise, no ethical system can dispense with this assumption of man's moral freedom. To be sure, the freedom is not absolute or infinite. The Talmud was well aware of the fact when it declared, "All is in the hands of God except the fear of God;"¹³ that is to say, only the realm of man's moral decision is exempt from God's control. As science has progressed, it has proved immensely valuable in indicating the biological, psychological, sociological and ecological boundaries which limit this freedom. But they do not destroy it; moral freedom remains indispensable to an operative ethical system.

This doctrine of moral freedom is expressed in Judaism's concept of the two impulses *yezer hatov*, "the good inclination," and *yezer hara*, "the evil inclination." Man is neither an angel nor a devil, neither perfect nor damned; his nature is plastic, malleable, waiting to be moulded by the moral decisions he makes each day of his life. The Rabbinic outlook insists that no man is innately and eternally evil, and refuses to believe that any man is forever beyond redemption. Man is not condemned by an ineradicable taint placed upon him by Adam's sin in the Garden, a doctrine for which, incidentally, there is no warrant in the Hebrew Bible. Nor, for that matter, is man totally at the mercy of his instincts. In the chapter following Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden because of their disobedience, God tells Cain before he commits murder:

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; its desire is for you, but you can master it.

(Gen. 4:7)

Man's Relation To Society

The concept of man's nature leads to the formulation of man's relationship to his fellows. Here, too, the Biblical account of Creation serves as the point of departure. It is characteristic of the Jewish tradition that it rarely deals with abstract formulations, but prefers to embody its principles in concrete situations. Thus, its doctrine of man's role in society emerges most clearly in a passage dealing with the cross-examinations of witnesses in a capital trial. The Mishnah instructs the judges to warn witnesses of the heinous character of false testimony by stressing the sanctity of each human life, which is derived from the creation of Adam. In this connection, a homily, at once naive and profound, spells out other important implications:

13. B. *Berakhot* 33b.

- (1) Mankind was created through Adam, a single human being, in order to teach that whoever destroys a single human life is regarded as though he destroyed an entire world, and he who saves a single human life is as though he saved an entire world.
- (2) The human race began with a single individual for the sake of peace among all men, so that no man might say, "My ancestor is greater than yours."
- (3) Adam's creation also makes it possible for heretics to say, "There are many heavenly powers!"
- (4) Moreover, the creation of humanity through one ancestor proclaims the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed be He. For man strikes off many coins with a single mould and they are all identical. But the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, stamps each man in the mould of Adam, and yet no one is identical with his fellow.
- (5) Finally, the creation of Adam teaches that each human being is obliged to declare, "For my sake was the world created" (Mishnah, Sanhedrin, 4:5)

An ancient supplemental Rabbinic work, the Tosefta, (Sanhedrin 8:3), which is contemporaneous with the Mishnah, adds another significant inference from the creation of Adam:

- (6) So that no sinner may say: "I am a sinner by inheritance, being a descendant of sinners," and no saint may say, "I am a saint by virtue of my descent from saints."¹⁴

With the exception of the third section which negates dualism and polytheism, the passage contains all the fundamentals of man's social relationship flowing from his God-given nature.

The implications are clear: man's innate dignity (set forth in section 1) is the source of his right to be different, which is the essence of freedom (section 4). The equality of men, as seen in their common origin (section 2), is the source of all men's right to justice (section 5).

Some important observations of the Mishnah's teaching on freedom and on justice need to be spelled out. The differences among men are not regarded as superficial or unimportant. They are not the artificial invention of priests or tyrants or the products of the corruption by civilization of the pristine innocence of the human race, as some eighteenth century thinkers believed. Nor are these distinctions an unfortunate aspect of human nature with which society must struggle and which it would be better to eliminate. The ancient Sages saw more truly into human nature when they recognized the physical and spiritual differences among men as God-given, innate, integral features of personality. In other words, they are not merely legitimate, they are valuable resources for the enrichment of human life and culture when properly utilized and expressed.

The right to justice inheres in all men, whatever their ethnic origin or racial character. The right and the duty to enjoy God's world and

14. The printed editions read *nefesh ahat miyisrael* "the life of a single Israelite." The additional word is clearly out of place, since the proof for the statement is drawn from Adam, who was obviously not an Israelite. The word is also missing in the Munich manuscript of the Talmud.

its blessings are inalienable, having been conferred upon them by God and not by the state or a social contract. Hence, these rights, which should be enforced and protected by a just government, cannot be abrogated by human fiat.

The oldest statement of human equality transcending all social differences occurs in Job's great Confession of Integrity:

Have I despised the cause of my manservant,
or of my maidservant, when they contended with me?
For I always remembered,
"What shall I do when God rises up,
and when He examines me, how shall I answer Him?
Did not He make him in the womb, as He made me,
and fashion us both alike in the womb?" (Job 31:15)

The sixth section, added from the Tosefta, underscores man's moral freedom. It declares that men cannot take refuge in their heredity either to arrogate superior virtues to themselves or to excuse their superior vices.

Man's Relation to His Natural Environment

It is significant that the Jewish ethical tradition transcends the positivist concept of ethics as "governing the relation of man and his fellows." The ethical consciousness is given an enormously broader scope by being set within a cosmic framework that encompasses the non-human elements of nature, not only the so-called lower animals, but the plant and mineral kingdoms as well. The recognition has been growing that man has duties to his "little brothers," the animals, and even to his more distant cousins, the trees and the flowers, as well as to the earth itself, which is his mother.

The conservation of natural resources, minerals, air and water, is more than good husbandry, or, to use the term in its etymological sense, good economics. Here a profound ethical imperative, irrespective of any individual or group advantage or disadvantage, is involved, but this conviction can flow only out of the perception of a cosmos in which man is not the sole or supreme arbiter of his destiny and of that of his fellow-creatures.

The prohibition of cruelty to animals, which is one of the Noahide Laws, is a principle written large in Biblical thought. Such laws as those forbidding plowing with a mixed team of an ox and a donkey (Deut. 20:10) or muzzling an animal during the threshing season (Deut. 25:4) or taking a mother bird and her young from the nest at the same time (Deut. 22:6-7) or slaughtering a cow and her calf on the same day (Lev. 22:28) reflect a deep feeling of pity for the lower creatures. The Hebrew dietary laws represent a complex of sources, practices and values which have as yet been incompletely explored. Nonetheless, the humanitarian motive is unmistakable. We may cite two aspects. There is the insistence

upon the speedy and accurate slaughtering of animals for food to minimize the pain. The prohibition of the eating of the blood, coupled with the command to pour it out because "the blood is the seat of life" (Deut. 12:23) impregnated the psyche of Jews with a sense of the "reverence for life" centuries before Albert Schweitzer.

The love of hunting is amply attested for the ancient world, both in Oriental and Greco-Roman literature, as well as for the modern age. This popular sport has developed an elaborate ethic and etiquette in Western society. But it is generally overlooked that this universal practice is quite at variance with the Biblical outlook, which relegates hunting to Nimrod and Esau, but regards it as unworthy of an Israelite to take the life of animals for sport.¹⁵

The compassion for the lower orders of creation reaches its climax in the last two words of the Book of Jonah. The prophet, indignant that his prophecy of doom for the hated Ninevites has been set aside by their genuine repentance, is admonished by God in words marked by supreme irony and compassion:

And the Lord said, you would have spared the gourd, on which you had not labored, nor made it grow; that came up in a night, and perished in a night. And shall I not spare the great city of Nineveh, in which more than twelve times ten thousand persons live, who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle? (Jonah 41:11-12)

Characteristically, the ethical attitude toward animals expressed in the Bible became a legal norm enforceable by sanctions in the Talmud under the rubric of "the pain of living creatures" (*za'ar ba'alei hayyim*). Man's obligation not to inflict cruelty and unnecessary pain upon animals as a principle of natural law is rooted in the recognition that, no less than man, they represent the handiwork of the Creator. Hence, the prohibition is included in the Noahide Laws.

Another profound and far-reaching Biblical source for ecological ethics has not hitherto been recognized—the Book of Job.¹⁶ The reason for this failure inheres in the manifold difficulties of the work and in the fact that the theme is implicitly, rather than explicitly, set forth in the text. The Book of Job reaches its climax in the two magnificent

15. References to hunting in the Talmud are rare (B. *Baba Batra* 75a; *Hullin* 10b; *Avodah Zarah* 18b). Cf. Responsum 27 of Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, "He who hunts game with dogs, as Gentiles do, will not enjoy the life to come." Instances of Jews engaging in hunting, like Herod in the Roman era, and Provençal Jews in medieval Europe, are few and are, undoubtedly, instances of acculturation to the non-Jewish environment. See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. VI, p. 504 and David Novak, *Law and Theology in Judaism* (New York, 1974), chap. 5, "The Sport of Hunting."

16. See the writer's *The Book of God and Man—A Study of Job* (Chicago, 1965), especially pp. 120, 297, 301, 302, and his *Commentary on Job*, now in press, which supply the basis for the ecological interpretation of Job given in the body of this paper.

Speeches of the Lord out of the Whirlwind (chaps. 38:1–40:2 and 40:6–41:26). In the earlier sections of the book, Job has protested his suffering as unjustified, charged God with cruelty, and cried out for vindication. In His responses, the Lord God does not brand Job as a sinner, which is the simplistic technique adopted by Job's conventional and myopic Friends in seeking to justify their Creator.

Instead, in the First Speech, the Lord describes with exultation and joy the world of nature which He has created, the earth and the sea, night and day, light and darkness, snow, hail and wind, rain, dew and ice, and the heavenly constellations above. The Lord then proceeds to describe His loving care for creatures of the wild, including beasts of prey, the lion, the raven, the mountain goat, the wild horse, the buffalo, the ostrich, the vulture—all manifestations of God's creative power. The implication is of basic significance—the natural world is not man-centered nor created exclusively for man's use.

The Second Speech of the Lord drives the point home even more vigorously. Here the Lord pictures in loving detail and with boundless pride two more of His creatures, the hippopotamus and the crocodile, both of whom are, by man's standard, positively repulsive and dangerous. They are part of the vast order of creation, a pattern only imperfectly revealed to man. It cannot be truly understood from the limited vantage-point of man's position in the world.

The purpose and meaning of the God Speeches is to offer a response to the agonizing problem of suffering. The implication which needs to be understood by the reader is that just as the world of nature cannot be fully grasped by man, though the evidence of pattern and order is clear, so there is a moral order in the universe which man cannot fully comprehend. But if the natural law and the moral order of the world cannot be fully understood by man, the Creator cannot fairly be criticized or challenged.

Our concern here, however, is not with the extraordinary contribution to religious thought of the Book of Job, but to underscore that it denies that "man is the measure of all things." It opposes the anthropocentric vision of the world, which comes so naturally to man, by a theocentric view, in which all creatures are the handiwork and the concern of their Maker.

It is ironic that the rise of interest in ecological values has been accompanied by a new calumny against the Hebrew Bible. In 1970, a group of Protestant theologians met at a conference on the "theology of survival" at the School of Theology in Claremont, California. According to newspaper accounts, "virtually all" the scholars agreed that the traditional Christian attitude toward nature had actually "given sanction" to the exploitation and spoliation of our natural resources, and to over-

population. The sources of this attitude, they declared, is the Hebrew Bible, specifically Genesis 1:28:

And God blessed them; and God said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The participants solemnly pointed to this verse, and particularly to the phrase "and subdue it," as giving men the license to use and abuse the natural world and its resources as they see fit, without limitation or restriction. Before the conference opened, an article in *Science* magazine by Lynn White, Jr., a professor of history at UCLA at Los Angeles, argued that this same idea in Genesis—together with the Judeo-Christian rejection of pagan beliefs in the divinity of nature—made it possible for Western society to "exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects."

What is the authentic teaching of Judaism about the relationship of man to nature? What meaning does it assign to the phrase, "and subdue it?" The unsensational truth is that this passage in Genesis was never invoked in order to establish a principle of action by man, vis-à-vis the environment. In fact, the Talmud, by a method of interpretation all its own, related the phrase "and subdue it" to the first part of the verse, "be fruitful and multiply."

Medieval Jewish commentators saw in the verse a reference to the biological and ecological fact that man is the dominant species on this planet, able to exercise his will upon other creatures (with the possible exception of insects and some rodents) and to modify the environment as he chooses. Nahmanides explained the passage as follows: "He gave them law and dominion on the earth to act according to their wish and to mine copper out of the hills and carry on other similar activities." The Italian commentator, Obadiah Sforno, gave the verb phrase a more restricted meaning: "And subdue it—that you protect yourself with your reason and prevent the animals from entering within your boundaries and you rule over them."

Jewish ethical teaching explicitly recognizes the duty that man owes to the natural world, to the rivers and forests, to the mountains and valleys that are man's hearth and home. This innate reverence for the handiwork of God is entirely distinct from a concern for personal property. Its legal source in Biblical thought is to be found, paradoxically enough, in the laws regulating warfare (Deuteronomy 20:19 f.). The Law of Moses forbids the Israelites, when laying siege to a city, to cut down the fruit trees surrounding the town. Nor does it matter whether the wood is needed for military purposes or the act is part of a campaign of *Schrecklichkeit* designed to bring the enemy to submission. The reason assigned for the interdiction is deeply moving: "For is the

tree a human being that it can seek refuge from before you during the siege?"¹⁷

The Biblical phrase used in the passage, "You shall not destroy" (*lo tash-hit*) becomes the basis, in Rabbinic law, of a far-reaching doctrine, (*bal tash-hit*).¹⁸ Jewish ethical theory extended the principle in Deuteronomy in three important directions.¹⁹

A. The Biblical passage forbade "wielding an axe" against a tree. The Rabbis extended the prohibition to any means of destruction, including shifting the course of a stream so that the tree would dry up.²⁰ They forbade the killing of animals²¹ or giving them possibly polluted water to drink.²²

B. A far-reaching extension was the broadening of the Biblical prohibition to apply not only to a state of siege in a time of war, but to all conditions, including peace-time.²³

C. Finally, while the Biblical passage dealt with a tree, which is an artifact of nature, the principle was extended to refer to all of the artifacts of man: "Whoever breaks vessels, or tears garments, or destroys a building, or clogs up a fountain, or does away with food in a destructive manner, violates the prohibition of *bal tash-hit*.²⁴ The general principle was clearly formulated: "It is forbidden to destroy or to injure (*hamekalkel*) anything capable of being useful to men."²⁵ The prohibition inheres in the reverence due to the creative element, the energy and ability, however humble, that enters into every existent thing, natural or man-made. The prohibition is completely unrelated to any doctrine of the sanctity of private property. Even if the so-called owners are willing, the wanton destruction of natural or human resources is forbidden.

17. Deut. 20:19. That the final clause is interrogative is clear. It may be rendered either as (a) "Is a tree a human being that it should come under siege by you?" (so Revised Standard Version, Jewish Publication Society Version, 1917, New English Bible, New American Bible), or (b) "Is a tree a human being that it can seek safety from you during a siege?" (so *The Torah*, New Jewish Version).

18. Unless it be due to an oversight, it is incomprehensible why the entire category is missing in Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh*. It is supplied in the *Shulhan Arukh* of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of L'ady.

19. See Gordis, "Judaism and the Spoliation of Nature," *Congress Bi-Weekly*, (April 2, 1971) : 9-12; E. G. Freudenstein, "Ecology and the Jewish Tradition," *JUDAISM*, 19 (Fall, 1970) : 406-414; J. I. Helfand, "Ecology and the Jewish Tradition: A Post-script," *JUDAISM*, 20 (Summer, 1971) : 330-335.

20. *Sifrei Shofetim*, section 203; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Melakhim* 6:8.

21. B. *Hullin* 7 b.

22. Tosafot on *Baba Kamma* 115b, and *Baba Mezia* 32b.

23. The commandment, listed in *Sefer Hahinukh*, ed. Hayyim Dov Chavel (Jerusalem, 5722-1961), pp. 647 f., is excellently defined: "This prohibition (against destruction) is operative every place and every time, and applies both to males and to females." (*Bekhol makom ubhekhol zeman bizekhharim ubinekevot*)

24. Maimonides, *Op. cit.* 6:9.

25. *Shulhan Arukh* of the Rav, *Hilkhot Shemirat Haguf*, sec. 14, (*hamekalkel lehanot bnai adam*).

The Prophetic Conception of History

The Jewish conception of man's nature leads directly to the Jewish hope for man's destiny. As has been pointed out, man's dignity and diversity are the source of his liberty. Man's unity and equality are the basis of justice. Justice and liberty, therefore, are the twin pillars upon which a viable society must be erected.

With this standard, we are in a position, perhaps, to have an understanding of the past history of mankind. Why is it that during the recorded history of man, now extending eight or ten thousand years, if we go back to the beginnings of Middle Eastern society, no civilization has permanently endured? Why is it that every culture, however resplendent, and every society, however powerful, has decayed and ultimately been destroyed? The historian, the philosopher, the sociologist, the economist, even the geologist and the climatologist, all offer explanations as to why one empire after another declined and fell—the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans, to which we may add the French and the British in our time. Why have all these empires fallen and disappeared?

The theories that these scholars present are significant and, undoubtedly, helpful. But, if the Hebrew Prophets were summoned, they would answer in far simpler terms. They would not negate these various theories, but would give an explanation that would undergird all the others. Prof. Morris Raphael Cohen declared that the greatest Hebrew contribution to civilization is the philosophy of history enunciated by the Prophets—the concept that history is not merely a chronicle of occurrences, a chain of unrelated incidents. On the contrary, they believed that history has a direction, a goal and, therefore, there is a meaning behind the bewildering complexity of human events. The Prophets saw man's world as governed by the law of consequence which, in perhaps oversimplified form, declares that right-doing leads to well-being and wrong-doing to disaster. In the words of Proverbs, "Righteousness exalts a people, but sin is the disgrace of nations" (Proverbs 14:34).

The Biblical tradition maintains that we live in a universe in which righteousness is the basic law of human experience. This law cannot be violated by society with impunity, any more than a builder can permanently disregard the laws of gravitation without suffering the penalty. There often is a delay from the time the sin is committed until the consequence appears, but sooner or later it must happen. No society yet created by man has been built upon the twin pillars of justice and freedom. Some civilizations have given their people a measure of justice and denied freedom, others have given them a measure of freedom but subverted justice. Most states have flouted both and relied upon force and deception to remain in power, thus attempting to escape

the law of consequence that is imbedded in the universe. It is, therefore, inevitable that each civilization, whatever its virtues and its contribution to the storehouse of human culture, has finally perished. For the Biblical tradition, the principles of liberty and justice are not human inventions but human discoveries. No less than the laws of chemistry or physics, they are the ways of God in the universe, which are imperatives for man, his right and duty to maintain.

The Shape of the Future

There may, therefore, be a reason to hope that the democratic order may ultimately achieve what has not been achieved by earlier systems, and thus attain to permanence. If this were to happen, it would not be because democracy is an ideal system. As Winston Churchill said, democracy is the worst possible system of government in the world, except that all others are worse. As we have learned to our cost, democracy is inefficient, prone to corruption, responsive to popular passions, and subject to manipulation by demagogues, advertising and the public relations industry. But democracy has one potential element of strength which has been in evidence both in the United States and in Israel, during these last eventful years; it has within it a self-generating mechanism by which it can correct its worst defects, deal with its problems, and ultimately move forward. So long as this flexibility of its spiritual muscles is preserved, there is hope for democracy as representing the goal of freedom and justice toward which mankind must move.

Yet it must be clearly understood that no previously existing system of government, democratic or authoritarian, and no prevailing order of society, capitalist or communist, has fully achieved the two goals of justice and freedom for all. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that, in the future, a system of society will evolve, superior to any presently existing pattern. Our present order, whatever its virtues, is still imperfect, and only the full culmination of God's purpose can establish an enduring, viable system for society.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that, for the Prophets, the dynamic of history was moving inevitably toward the kingdom of God on earth, which would be established "within history." The famous prophesy in Isaiah (chap. 2) and in Micah (chap. 4) on world peace do not require a transformation of human nature into an angelic order.²⁶ Within the four verses of that immortal prophesy, the words for "nation" and for "people" occur six times. Nations would not disappear, conflicts of attitude and interest would still exist, but they would be

26. The prophetic concept of nationalism is treated in R. Gordis, *Judaism For the Modern Age* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1955), pp. 319-330, and Gordis, *Poets, Prophets and Sages* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1971), pp. 268-279.

submitted to a higher sovereignty. The Hebrew prophets looked forward, not to the elimination of nationalism, but to its moralization, so that the ethnic groups of mankind would be cultural in expression and moral in governance. Plato, the noblest of the Greeks, envisioned his ideal Republic in the future as being protected by a standing army, safeguarding its ramparts against the barbarians without. The Hebrew Prophets were the first to dream of peace. But they went further, and indicated the technique for its achievement—the recognition of the moral law as binding on all nations. Thus, the establishment of freedom and justice would bring about the blessing of peace. A Rabbinic utterance declares, “The world stands upon three pillars, upon truth, upon justice and upon peace. And all three are one, for where truth prevails and justice is done, peace results.”²⁷

For Judaism, the guarantor of man’s ideal future is God, but its architect is man himself. In establishing an ethical system in a world where man’s powers have been dramatically enlarged beyond the wildest dreams of earlier generations, man is not attempting to play God or to usurp His throne. If he strives and succeeds in building an ethical society, he has the capacity, for the first time in his experience, to become, in the magnificent Rabbinic phrase, “God’s co-partner in the work of creation.”²⁸

27. P. *Taanit*, 4:2.

28. The phrase is used, in a variety of contexts in Rabbinic literature, to refer to a judge rendering just decisions (B. *Shabbat* 10a), to one reciting the Biblical passage on the Sabbath in Gen. 2:1-3 (B. *Shabbat* 119b), and to the Patriarch Abraham (Midrash, *Bereshit Rabbah* 43:8).

The Uniqueness of the Early Sephardic Community in America

RUTH BIRNBAUM

IN ASSESSING THE UNIQUENESS OF THE EARLY Sephardic community in America, I am reminded of the precise proportion of spices that went into the composition of the incense in the Temple. If honey were to be added or one of the caustic ingredients deleted, the incense was rendered unfit for sacred use.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, history is not written with such prescriptive formulas of facts, and what may be one historian's honey may well set off a caustic reaction in another historian. In this respect, the documentary evidence of the Sephardic community in Colonial America is a case in point. It appears that Professor Marcus¹ extrapolation of the data is a self-conscious *yihus* away from the romanticization of the period by the de Sola Pools² or Stephen Birmingham.³ Asser Levy, for example, one of the twenty-three who went from Recife to New Amsterdam, is described by the de Sola Pools as one of the founding fathers of Shearith Israel. Birmingham refers to him as a "connection of Moses Levy." In Marcus' voluminous work, he becomes an avowed Ashkenazi among the Sephardim. In fact, it becomes quite evident that Marcus seldom misses an opportunity, either in his smattering of "probably's" or in his resifting of the facts, to be explicit about the central and east European origins of the Jews in the early Sephardic period. On the other hand, where Marcus describes the Gratz brothers as coming from Silesia,⁴ Birmingham is careful to point out that "the Gratzes, like the Ettings and the Frankses had come from Inquisitional Spain by way of Germany. In Spain, the name may have been Gracia, or Garcia."⁵

Under these conditions, one immediately becomes aware of the bitter galbanum in the interpretation of history and becomes alerted to the fact that choices have to be made. Without demeaning the contribution of the Ashkenazic Jews during the Colonial period, and they may have constituted about half of the Jewish population, the fact remains that the established Sephardic Jewish organization officially and

1. Jacob Rader Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew 1492-1776* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), 3 Vols.

2. David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).

3. Stephen Birmingham, *The Grandees* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

4. Marcus, *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 271.

5. Birmingham, *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

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tenaciously maintained its identity and supremacy until 1825, when an Ashkenazic group defected from Shearith Israel and formed the first Ashkenazic congregation, Bnai Jeshurun, in New York.

In analyzing the combination of factors and events which enabled this first Jewish group on American soil to develop in a quite different manner from the many Jewish communities in the vast Jewish dispersion, I would extract two major ingredients, the blending and interaction of which, among the many others, produced an unprecedented flavor. One, the Sephardim who came to the New World were, in their own eyes, an elitist group and so they expected to be viewed in the sight of others. They had been men of property and learning in Spain and Portugal and reached heights of achievement as physicians, philosophers, poets, scholars, astronomers, mathematicians, bankers and financial advisers to the royal court. The sultan of Turkey, upon hearing about the Expulsion was said to comment: "The King of Spain must have lost his mind. He is expelling his best subjects."⁶ It was this innate outlook that gave the small group the impetus to establish themselves as in no way inferior to any other group and, at the same time, to maintain themselves as a distinct, religious, identifiable entity. And it was this elitist self-image which made them zealously guard the character of their institutions in America. Thus, they became a part of the economic, social and political American community, and apart from the American heterogeneous religious community, *helek min hazibbur ve-halak min ha-zibbur*. They shared with their Sephardic kinsmen in Europe a high-born aristocratic breeding which tied them together with a sense of *noblesse oblige*. In our modern sociological terminology, it was an ingroup relationship.

But should you wish to argue that this relationship was cemented, not by the glue of elitism, but by the fact that they all shared the same Sephardic culture, I would have to point to another branch of the Jewish Iberian population which did not participate in this rarefied atmosphere. These were the Sephardic Jews in Spain and Portugal who did not achieve a comparable social and economic status, nor were they exposed to the same secularism as the elitist group that migrated to the Western world. This difference was reflected in variations of language and customs; for example, the elitist group spoke Castilian while the artisan group developed Ladino. The Oriental branch, so-called because they migrated to the East after the Expulsion, were the "Jewish tailors, cobblers, blacksmiths, and knife grinders,"⁷ who did not experience the same integration and equalization in a foreign culture as did their Occidental brethren. They settled in the economically and culturally underdeveloped Ottoman Empire, living a culturally insular existence.

6. Ibid., p. 45.

7. Ibid., p. 330.

The second ingredient for the uniqueness of the Jewish community in America was the physical, external fact of the natural wealth of an unpopulated and unsullied continent and the economic, social and political opportunities which it offered for untried institutions. The Jews had already attained a measure of economic and religious freedom under Dutch rule, but the Old World's attitudes and its stratified society were too ensconced to allow for any new experimentation. In early America, the threat of the hostile Indians and the constantly expanding frontiers required interdependent action for survival and, in the process, these Old World attitudes were washed away with the tides of growth and progress. Unlike their persecuted ancestors in the past, the Jews in America never experienced the fear of tyranny. In the new land, immigration was encouraged and brought with it a diversity of beliefs so that no group was either a decided majority or minority. The Jews were merely one of a profusion of other faiths. Under such pluralism, the term "establishment" became an evanescent concept. As Jefferson stated, "in America, history was on the side of the Jews."⁸

To use a Heideggerian term, there was a "thrownness" about the twenty-three Jewish individuals who found themselves in the New Amsterdam harbor in September, 1654. The details surrounding their journey to North America are nebulous⁹ but some facts emerge. They were passengers on one of a fleet of sixteen ships sailing for Holland. The ships contained mostly Sephardic families who, under the religious freedom offered by Dutch rule in Recife, Brazil, had thrown off their Marrano mask. But with the recapture of Recife in 1654 by the Portuguese, the Sephardim were again subject to the Inquisition and given three months to leave.

Accidentally, or providentially, one of the boats fell prey to Spanish pirates who despoiled the twenty-three of their wealth. They were ultimately rescued by a French war vessel, the *St. Charles*, captained by one Jacques de la Motthe who brought them to New Amsterdam. To speak, therefore, of causes and motives for their arrival in North America is problematic. What is known is that they were escaping religious persecution in Brazil and were seeking to re-establish their common religious and economic ties with their Spanish-Portuguese kinsmen under Dutch rule.

There were no new variants in Peter Stuyvesant's bag of Old World prejudices. Confronted with the physical presence of the twenty-three Jews, members of "a deceitful race" who professed "an abominable religion," he asked them "in a friendly way to depart."¹⁰ To Stuyvesant's

8. Rufus Lears, *The Jews in America* (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1954), p. 51.

9. Pool, *Op. cit.*, pp. 8, 9.

10. Lears, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

credit or discredit, it should be noted that his prejudices extended in equal proportions towards the Lutherans, Mennonites, Quakers, Papists, and other sects outside of the established Dutch Reformed Church. However, having been previously admonished not to take matters into his own hands "before you shall have first received our instructions," Stuyvesant wrote to the directors of the Dutch West India Company in Holland to confirm his position. Their response directed him to allow the Jews to "travel and trade to, and in, New Netherland and live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the Company or to the community." The instructions were based on two considerations. First, "because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation . . . in the taking of Brazil," and second, "because of the large amount of capital which they (the Jews in Holland) still have invested in the shares of this company."¹¹

There seems to be unanimity among the historians about these facts but not about their fictive details. It seems that Marcus belongs to the iconoclastic school of contemporary historical reporting described as "the truth behind the facts," or "now it can be told" debunkment. He imputes a purely selfish economic reaction on the part of the Jews in Holland towards their fellow kinsmen in America. And I quote from his book:

When Stuyvesant's letter of September 22 reached Amsterdam, the Jews there reacted to it vigorously. They needed open colonies to which they could dispatch their poor and already had on their hands a substantial number of Brazilian refugees, most of whom had salvaged very few of their possessions. The Amsterdamers knew very well that if the twenty-three were shipped back to Holland, they would have to be supported by the Jewish community. Moreover, now that Brazil had been lost to the Dutch, some of the Amsterdam Jewish merchants were ready to venture their capital in the colony on the Hudson. For Amsterdam Jewry, then, it was a matter of importance that the distant North American trading post be receptive to Jewish settlers, and when the directors of the company, informed by Stuyvesant of the arrival of the impoverished Brazilian Jewish emigres, issued an embargo on passports for Amsterdam Jews, the city's Jewish leaders felt themselves compelled to take immediate action.¹²

Of course, there is no doubt that the Holland Jews saw a mercantilist advantage to their fellow Jews settling in New Amsterdam; so did the Dutch. But Marcus' measurement of the motives, attitudes and relationships creates an unholy new incense. There seems to be lacking the *lifnim meshurat hadin* in his analysis, the *noblesse oblige* enunciated by the Rabbis, that all Israel are responsible for each other, the sense of identity above the economic expediency which stimulated the Jews in America to call upon their co-religionists in Amsterdam time and again to protest against Peter Stuyvesant's attempts to sabotage their rights.

11. Pool, p. 18.

12. Marcus, pp. 218-219.

In any event, the right of the twenty-three to settle and trade in New Amsterdam was made possible and facilitated by their co-religionists in Holland. It is also worth mentioning that the condition that the poor not be a burden upon the community might well have become the watchword of the future network of Jewish philanthropies in America.

The degrees by which the small Sephardic community—and they constituted a *minyan* from the very beginning¹³—secured their religious, economic, civil and political rights in the New World are fundamental, not only because they paved the way for later Jewish immigrants and contributed to our status today as undifferentiated Jewish American citizens, but for the rights which they obtained for the other religious minority groups in the colony. For, as Stuyvesant stated: “Giving them (the Jews) liberty, we cannot refuse the Lutherans and Papists.”¹⁴

In determined steps, the small group of Sephardic Jews (later augmented by a sprinkling of immigrants from Holland, so that by the end of the seventeenth century they numbered twenty families of about one hundred individuals), persisted in their rights to trade and to travel, to own real estate and to assemble quietly in worship within their homes. In 1656, two years after their arrival in America, “when the need and the occasion therefor arose,” the Jews were granted “a little hook of land”¹⁵ for a burial ground. Much like Abraham’s purchase of the Cave of Machpelah in Canaan, the graveyard in America became the first official evidence of the existence of the Jewish community on these shores.

In order to “exercise in all quietness the religion within their homes,” the Directors of the Dutch West India Company suggested that they were to “endeavor to build their houses close together in a convenient place on one or the other side of New Amsterdam—at their choice—as they have done here.”¹⁶ There was no ghetto, but a voluntary association which was technically recognizable as a “Jewish Quarter” and popularly known as “Jews’ Alley.” The extent of the “voluntary” nature of this association was, of course, limited by the fact that no Jew would be admitted to Jewish religious burial who did not adhere to the traditional observances, as for example, *kashrut*.

“As they have done here” was a recurrent phrase in the directives sent to Peter Stuyvesant from Holland. The Jews in America were not creating any new rights, but, as leading taxpayers, they were demanding their equal civil rights, “if, like other burghers, they must and shall

13. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

14. Pool, pp. 28 and 36. (See, also, Marcus, p. 232.)

15. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 22. (See, also, Marcus, p. 226.)

contribute [taxes], to enjoy the same liberty allowed to other burghers. . . ."¹⁷

Asser Levy was especially pugnacious about securing his rights, particularly the right to serve in the militia. This, too, was not an unprecedented action, since in Recife the Jews had defended the city alongside the Dutch against the Portuguese. In September, 1655, Indians had attacked Manhattan and Asser Levy, as a *de facto* defender, later demanded his "burgher certificate" as well as the elimination of the tax which he had been required to pay for being excluded (albeit arbitrarily) from standing guard.

By the time the British took over the colony in 1664, the Jews had attained all of their burgher rights except that they could not indulge in retail trade nor worship in public, rights which were not allowed them in the Old World. In America, however, buttressed by the peculiar combination of ingredients, the Jewish Sephardic community would not countenance any curtailment of their rights and they conducted these activities, if not *de jure*, then *de facto*. In a map of New York, shown in 1695¹⁸, the cartographer indicates the existence of a synagogue, but it was not until 1728 that the Jews were given official permission to build one. This was the Sephardic Shearith Israel which, for twenty years, was the only organized Jewish congregation in the colonies. Thereafter, Sephardic congregations were formally established in Savannah, in 1732; in Charleston, in 1750; in Philadelphia, in 1760; in Newport, in 1763; and in Richmond, in 1790. Each of these was won with determination and difficulty.

The New York Jews were so much a part of the pluralistic American scene that, in 1711, seven of them contributed to the building fund of Trinity Church.¹⁹ In 1718, two Jews were chosen to be constable in New York and, after 1740, an act of Parliament permitted the Jews to be fully naturalized. Educational institutions were open to American Jews and, in 1770, several had already become alumni of American colleges.²⁰ When the colonies were ready to declare their severance from England, the two thousand Jews²¹ were an integrated part of the economic, civil, political and social structure of American society.

Although the Jews constituted a small fraction of the population, they had a considerable share in the economic life of colonial America. From the very beginning, most of the Sephardic Jews remained an urban group, settling on the eastern seaboard where some became prominent in maritime commerce. As Marcus observes, "there were no Jewish

17. Lears, pp. 28, 29. (See, also, Pool, p. 25.)

18. Pool, p. 35.

19. Ibid., p. 447.

20. Oscar Handlin, *Adventures in Freedom* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954), p. 19.

21. Ibid., p. 6.

farmers in the back country.”²² Others ventured into outer trading posts, becoming profitable fur-traders. There were also skilled craftsmen in wood and metal, tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, bakers, butchers and candlemakers. During the Revolution, a few were large-scale purveyors who supplied the armies.

The Jews reacted to the Revolutionary struggle as did the other Americans. A few were loyalists, the majority were patriots. They viewed the issues in terms of economic self-interest, in terms of a developing sense of national identity and in terms of idealistic principles of freedom and rights. Birmingham suggests a more unified Jewish-historical motive, stating that since England had had anti-Semitic pogroms, “there was no question where most of the New York Sephardim would stand: squarely against the British.”²³

Jewish immigration to America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a sporadic, unpatterned phenomenon. The majority of men who came were young and unmarried.²⁴ In spite of the religious freedom and the economic opportunities, there were no waves of immigrants to the New World. “Relatively few Jews came to America solely to practice their faith.”²⁵ Moreover, Europe was experiencing a rising economy and European Jewish businessmen “had no need to hazard their lives and to bury themselves culturally and religiously in distant America.”²⁶

If the elitist self-image impelled the Sephardim onto the American stage as equal participants in the drama of a developing nation, it also separated them from the general variety of religious sects. From the very beginning, they established themselves as conveyors of an ancient Sephardic faith in a New World. The formal celebration of Rosh Hashanah a few days after their arrival was an auspicious beginning. But the newness of the continent, which was an advantage in creating new institutions, now worked to their disadvantage. They constituted, to use Dr. Mordecai Wilensky’s pun, an *Am rekah*. They were the sole Jewish group in North America. The requirements for traditional observance were lacking. There were no holy books, no teachers, no Torah scrolls, no ceremonial objects, not even a lunar calendar.²⁷ In the spring, however, arrivals from Holland brought with them a Torah scroll, prayer books in *Minhag Sephardi*, and necessary appointments lent by the *parnassim* of the Sephardic community there.²⁸ In fact, the solidarity of the Sephardic community constantly manifested itself in terms of mutual finan-

22. Marcus, p. 234.

23. Birmingham, p. 101.

24. Marcus, p. 282.

25. Ibid., p. 268.

26. Ibid., p. 283.

27. Handlin, p. 13.

28. Marcus, p. 232.

cial help and cultural reinforcements of spiritual leadership. Seventy-five years after their arrival, when the American Sephardim laid the foundation for Shearith Israel, contributions for the building came from Barbados, Jamaica, Boston, Dutch Guiana, Curaçao, London and Holland.

There is every indication that the small group was ritually observant.²⁹ The early Sephardim who, as Marranos, had been deprived of practicing their religion in public, were now especially conscientious about practicing their religion in the freedom of their new surroundings. They were just as zealous in fulfilling their religious precepts in the New World as they were in establishing their economic, civil and political rights. The services were in Hebrew and followed the Sephardic rite, with laymen fulfilling the leadership role. Only later on, when Shearith Israel became a complex of five buildings, including the synagogue, the school center, the *mikvah*, the home of the *hazzan*, and the home of the *shammash*, were there full-time professionals. There was, however, no official rabbi.³⁰ Occasionally, one from South America appeared in the pulpit, but he was not engaged in a full-time capacity.

In the earliest days, one or two prayers were said in Portuguese, as for example, the prayer for the government and the designation for the reading of the Scroll. After the Revolution, English was used in the prayer for the government.³¹

The small Jewish community had kosher meat, and a legal document records that the two butchers were excused from killing hogs. They observed the Sabbath and, later, with the influx of immigrants, when the walking distance to the place of worship was too far, they moved to a more central place. The de Sola Pools pridefully note that "in all the recorded history of Shearith Israel, no Sabbath morning service has had to be curtailed for lack of a minyan of ten, even during blizzards, storms or epidemics."³²

Ashkenazim who joined, learned the Sephardic pronunciation and accepted the poetic hymns of Ibn Gabirol, Ibn Ezra and Halevi.³³ There was also an identification with the larger world of Jewry. The traditional prayer for the redemptive return of the dispersed to Zion was always a part of the Sephardic service in America. To these erstwhile Marranos, this creedal statement had particular significance, since now they were able to re-affirm their belief in the coming of the Messiah and thus reject the Christian doctrine that the Messiah had already come in the person of Jesus.³⁴

29. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 955. Also p. 309.

30. Ibid., p. 542.

31. Pool, p. 87.

32. Ibid., p. 103.

33. Nbid., p. 81.

34. I am indebted to Dr. Eli Grad, President, Hebrew College, for pointing this out to me.

A more modern and tangible Zionist gesture was made in the first quarter of the nineteenth century when Mordecai Manuel Noah expressed his responsibility for suffering Jews in Africa by a noble, but futile, attempt for their Utopian relocation in Ararat, New York.

Marcus ruefully notes that "leadership in New Amsterdam's tiny Jewish community fell neither to the poor Ashkenazi Asser Levy, nor to his fellow Ashkenazi Jacob Barsimson; it fell to the five well-to-do Sephardic merchants who had all arrived in the colony from Amsterdam by 1655."³⁵ This continued to be the pattern of administrative leadership of the Sephardic institutions in America.³⁶

The de Sola Pools point with pride to the decorous and devout services in Shearith Israel. In fact, the impression left with the reader about the Sephardic group is one of dignity, quiet reserve and elegance. Marcus, however, is somewhat less impressed with such an exalted pose and gleefully punctures this image with the following: "Gentility does not appear to have been much in evidence among these first Jewish settlers, and indeed the court records—not always a fair indication—suggest they were a rude and conglomerate lot. Asser Levy, for example, sued a fellow butcher who had accused him of consorting with thieves."³⁷ Marcus' tidbit is further embellished by undignified name-calling which he cites from the records. It is amusing to note that this is one of the few instances where Marcus does not prefix Asser Levy's name with the word "Ashkenazi."

Since several hundred years have elapsed and the battle still ensues between these two currents in the Judaic stream, one begins to get a graphic picture of the inner tensions which existed between the two groups in the early Sephardic period. Apparently, the Sephardic ritual was so rigidly imposed upon the Jews in America that, in 1777, a synahe cites from the records. It is amusing to note that this is one of the fact that it was organized by Ashkenazic Jews, it followed the Sephardic constitution of Shearith Israel and has continued in the Sephardic tradition to this day.³⁸

The family relationships of the Sephardic families were equally zealously guarded. As noted above, there was only a sporadic re-inforcement of the Sephardic population in America. As a result, their prolific offspring intermarried, creating such "labyrinthine bloodlines" that "in the tangled Lopez-Gomez-Rivera bloodline, one of Aaron Lopez' daughters, Hannah, married her uncle. With this union, Aaron's brother-in-law

35. Marcus, p. 239.

36. Handlin, p. 10.

37. Marcus, p. 239.

38. Ruth Gay, *Jews in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965), p. 23.

became his son-in-law as well, and Hannah Lopez became her mother's sister-in-law."³⁹

Comfortable acceptance in the American fabric of society served, in time, to weaken the thread of Sephardic Jewish identity. By the nineteenth century the Sephardic generation was American born; many had married Ashkenazim; some had intermarried and converted to Christianity. Lacking were the vigorous qualities of leadership which had characterized the early community. An effeteness had taken hold of the elitist group who crumbled before the more robust German assertiveness. In 1825, with the establishment of Bnai Jeshurun, the Sephardic monopoly was destroyed in America.

"Colonial Sephardic Jewry produced no great books, no great minds, no intellectual leaders, no literary creations of any lasting significance,"^{*40} but they did establish the traditional heritage of Judaism in America to take its place on an equal basis alongside the diversity of faiths. In spite of their small numbers, the Sephardic community pioneered the first path on American soil, thus facilitating the adjustment of subsequent Jewish immigrants to this country.

39. Birmingham, p. 117.

* A Hebrew grammar was written by Judah Monis, a convert to Christianity and an instructor at Harvard. See Pool p. 228, and the article by Arthur A. Chiel, "Judah Monis, The Harvard Convert," JUDAISM (Spring, 1974): 228-232.

40. Marcus, p. xxvii.

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Early Zionist Ideals Among Sephardim in the Nineteenth Century

JOSÉ FAUR

I. Political Emancipation and the Integrity of the Jewish Nation.

GALUT, IN SEPHARDIC THOUGHT, IS PRIMARILY A political concept. In its barest form it means that the Jewish nation was not dissolved with the territorial loss of the land of Israel. This claim rests on the idea that Jewish national autonomy is not predicated upon the control of a particular geographical area. Rather, it is an extension of the internal legal, social, and cultural institutions governing the Jewish People.¹ It is pertinent to add, at this juncture, that the Sephardim view themselves as members of the Jewish nation, rather than of the Jewish religion: the political dimension of Judaism is essential to the Sephardic mind. There are several implications to this idea; two deserve special attention. First, the governments serving as the hosts of the Jewish nation are not the supreme legal and political authority of the Jews. The rules and legislations governing the Jewish People in the host country are not the fiat of the authority of that country over the Jews, but of negotiations and accord arrived at by two equally autonomous parties, the Jewish nation in Exile, and the host government.² Second, as an

1. As Vico has shown, (*The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, [Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968], # 676, p. 255), in the heroic age the "vanquished were regarded as godless men, so that along with civil liberty they lost natural liberty as well." Essentially, this political idea dominated the world up to relatively recent times, where the *right of the sword*, the *merum imperium* or absolute sovereignty, underlay the right for civil and criminal administration of justice. Thus, the concept of *galut* is a direct challenge to the very foundations of heroic political thinking.

2. The specifics of the idea of a Jewish nation ought to be properly examined in the light of the enormous data that is available on the subject. It bears directly on many significant aspects of Sephardic history. For instance, when the small group of Jews seeking permission to settle in New Amsterdam presented a petition in January, 1655, it was in the name of "the Jewish nation," (see Irving J. Sloan, "Selected Documents," *The Jews in America, 1621-1970*, [New York: Ocean Publications, 1971], p. 51). Throughout this document, they never referred to themselves as members of the Jewish religion, or as individual Jews, but as the "Jewish nation," with political connotations. (See also, *Ibid.*, p. 53. Cf. below, note 4.) This point is of particular significance in understanding the attitudes of the official governments towards the Jews, since, strictly speaking, the problem of the Jewish nation bordered on the political, rather than on the narrow issue of religious freedom. A government may have been willing to grant religious freedom to its subjects, but still could refuse to recognize the political autonomy of a particular group living within its borders.

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extension of the foregoing, the messianic ideal expressed the hope that the Jewish nation would eventually establish itself in the Promised Land.

From this perspective it is evident that the demand for citizenship from the host government meant the recognition of that government as the supreme legal and political authority of the Jews, and, thereby, the abdication of Jewish political autonomy.

The question regarding the Jewish nation came to the fore when the issue of Jewish citizenship was debated in Europe. Napoleon, like all properly informed Christians, regarded the Jews as a separate nation.³ This point is specially significant for an adequate understanding of the issues underlying Jewish emancipation. Christians who were in favor of granting citizenship to the Jews demanded, as a condition *sine qua non*, the abolition of the Jewish nation. Otherwise, to grant French citizenship to the Jew would be as ridiculous as granting French citizenship to an Englishman or to a Dane. Likewise, those who opposed giving citizenship to the Jews argued that, since the Jews had their own autonomous nation, they were not part of the French nation.⁴

One of the principal effects of granting citizenship to the Jews by Napoleon was the dissolution of the Jewish nation. The Jewish Sanhedrin, convoked in Paris, May 30, 1806, testified obliquely to this effect:

At the present time, when the Jews no longer form a separate people, but enjoy the advantage of being incorporated with the Great Nation [i.e. French Empire] (which privilege they consider as a kind of political redemption) . . .⁵

The sixth question put before the Sanhedrin, "*Do Jews born in France and treated by the laws as French citizens, consider France as their country? Are they bound to defend it? Are they bound to obey the laws and to conform to the dispositions of the civil code?*"⁶ was directly concerned with the issue of the Jewish nation. F. D. Kirwan, the translator of the Sanhedrin's transactions, clearly perceived the ultimate consequences of the Sanhedrin's response:

The answer to the sixth question, by which the French Jews acknowledge France as their country, without any restrictions whatever, is still a more heinous dereliction of the tenets of Mosaic law; for they give up by it the hope of the expected Messiah, and the everlasting possession of the

3. See Robert Anchel, *Napoléon et les Juifs*, (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1928), p. 42, note 2; cf. Ibid. pp. 63-69. On the attitude of Napoleon toward the Jews, see Ibid., pp. 62-74 and below, note 7.

4. For a glimpse on this subject, see Zoa Swajkowski, "Jewish Autonomy Debated and Attacked during the French Revolution," *Historia Judaica*, 20 (1958): 31-46. It should be noted, *en passant*, that the situation of the Jews, as a *separate national entity*, was fundamentally different from that of the Protestants. The Protestants were only a separate *religious* group, without any claims to national autonomy. This point has not been properly appreciated. Cf. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

5. F. D. Kirwan, Esq., trans. and Diogene Tama, ed., *Transactions of the Parisian Sanhedrin* (London: Charles Taylor, 1807), p. 180.

6. Ibid., p. 181.

promised land of Canaan which they deem a part of the sacred Covenant between God and his chosen people.⁷

Zionist ideals among Sephardim in the 19th Century may best be understood in the light of the new cultural and political trends affecting Europe at that time. There was a profound awareness that the Jewish nation in *galut* would eventually surrender its autonomy and disintegrate under the pressures of rational secularism and political emancipation. It was the view of Rabbis such as Yehuda Bibas (1780-1852), Yehuda Alcalai (1798-1879), Natan Amram (1805-1870), Baruch Miṭrani (1847-1919), and others, that the only effective way to preserve Jewish autonomy in modern times was by establishing a Jewish national home in the Holy Land.

We shall proceed to investigate first the efforts made by Sephardim at that time for the revival of Hebrew as the national language of the Jewish people.

II. *The Revival of the Hebrew Language: Nationalistic and Political Considerations.*

The Sephardim were the first to realize the political role that the Hebrew language could play in promoting Jewish nationalistic feelings and political unity among Jews.

7. Kirwan accused the participants of the Parisian Sanhedrin of flouting Jewish law in order to conform with the wishes of the government. His views on this matter are extremely interesting. In his preface, xiii-xv, he writes:

But while we pay a just tribute to their talents [the members of the Parisian Sanhedrin], we must deplore the way in which they have been shamefully abused, in many instances. Few of them, indeed, have raised their voices against the tyrannical Regulations, which have been imposed upon them; some of their answers, it is true, are highly satisfactory, and among them, those concerning usury; but, in many other cases, they have manifested a culpable readiness to accede to or even to anticipate whatever might suit the views of their government, without much regard to the precepts of their law. But for the strong opposition of the Rabbis, the assembly would, as far as its authority could have gone, sanctioned the marriages of Jews with Christians, nay, in the tumultuous debate which took place on the occasion, a member broadly declared that marriage had nothing of a divine institution, and that the first precept was *increase and multiply*. Nor is this the only instance in which we remark, with sorrow, that the contagious infidelity of France had crept in among the Israelites. In the festival of the 15th of August, the cyphers of *Napoleon* and of *Josephine* were profanely blended with the unutterable name of Jehovah, and the Imperial Eagle was placed over the Sacred Ark. This, we understand, has given much offence, and with very just reason, we think, to the most respectable men of that community in these kingdoms.

Elsewhere, Kirwan suggests (pp. viii-ix) that Napoleon may have entertained "the idea of re-establishing them in Palestine, and that this forms a part of his plan respecting Egypt, which he is well known never to have abandoned." The lay and religious authorities that were set up by the French government were intended to remove the Jews further from the mass of the people, and, as to the Rabbinic authorities, he makes the following remark, (p. xi):

These Regulations have another remarkable feature, common to all the recent politico-religious conceptions of the French government. The Rabbis are by them set as spies over the Jews, like the ministers of the Roman Catholic religion over the rest of the Frenchmen.

In one of her essays, published in 1842, seventeen years before the birth of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, Grace Aguilar (1816-1847) presented this point quite forcibly. She argued that "the preservation of our Law in its original purity" was a supreme duty in ancient times; "how much more requisite must it be now," in modern times. Hebrew was "the silver link" that would give unity to the Jewish nation scattered throughout the earth. To this effect, it was imperative that Hebrew be taught to every Jewish man and woman. Commenting on the parental duty to educate the child, Miss Aguilar remarked:

Ere we proceed to the remainder of this verse, may we be permitted to hint on the importance of making the Hebrew language familiar to every Hebrew child?⁸

Against those who argued that Hebrew is a dead language, she replied:

It cannot be considered a dead language; for the nation to which it originally belonged continues to exist, and will exist for ever.⁹

In particular, she pointed out the national significance of Hebrew as a means of promoting political unity among the Jews:

It is not indeed spoken as it would have been, had we remained in our own land; yet it might still continue the link uniting the sons of Israel wherever they may be. The sojourners in England, France, Austria, Spain, might be enabled to converse or to commune with each other in their own native tongue, though of the language of their respective homes each might be ignorant.¹⁰

Miss Aguilar realized that, in order to accomplish this goal, it was necessary to bring about a change in the current method of instruction: rather than learn the language through the Hebrew classics, one should learn the Hebrew classics through the language. Hebrew ought to be spoken before it is read. The method used in Jewish schools, to confront the child who has just learned the Hebrew alphabet with the liturgy, was as ridiculous as if "as soon as a child had acquired his letters in French or Italian, the *Henriade* or Dante should be placed before him, and he should be desired to learn passages by rote with merely the assistance of a subjoined translation."¹¹

Her views on the effective revision of the pedagogical system in the Hebrew school are specific:

Never may we hope for the perfect attainment of this ancient and glorious language, till the present system has given place to one more calculated to engage a child's fancy; till the prayer book is not the first

8. Grace Aguilar, *The Spirit of Judaism*, [3rd ed.] (Philadelphia: 5624), p. 139. All subsequent quotations and paginations are from this edition.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

which we place in an infant's hands; till other than words so sacred as prayer are the first we teach our children to repeat. Our aim indeed should be to enable them to address their Creator in the language of their ancestors, to read His word pure and unaltered, even as it came from Heaven; but by placing it too early before them, we frustrate our own desires.¹²

Miss Aguilar perceived the *religious* and *political* roles that only the Hebrew language could adequately perform. The sacred task of the Jewish educator was

that every child of Israel, male or female, should perfectly understand the language of our ancestors, that in which the awful yet invisible Voice delivered His dictates to Moses, that we may indeed feel Hebrew is bound to Hebrew by a link neither oceans nor water nor spreading wastes of land can sever! . . . The sacred language is the silver link which, uniting them to each other, separates them from other nations, and makes them feel that they are indeed the witnesses of the Lord. And while they read in rejoicing faith the Book of Life in the language in which it was given, or in humble adoration prostrate themselves before God's throne, must not a glowing of the whole soul attend the addressing of the Eternal, in the same language in which His awful voice addressed His favored servants?¹³

A few years earlier, in 1837, her friend, Abigail Abarbanel Lindo (1803-1848), had already published a Hebrew-English, English-Hebrew Lexicon, with the "object to assist those who wish to study the sacred language."¹⁴

In 1845, Rabbi Yisrael Moshe Hazzan (1807-1863) made an appeal for the revival of the Hebrew language. Like Miss Aguilar, he, too, emphasized the nationalistic role of Hebrew in promoting political unity among Jews. Moreover, he pointed to the Christian interest in classical languages as an example which the assimilationist Jew in particular should try to emulate by studying the languages of his own classical literature. It is of great significance to note that Rabbi Hazzan indicated that, since the Reform movement cited among one of its objectives the promotion of greater unity among the Jewish people, they could accomplish this objective by establishing schools to teach Hebrew.

Do you not yourself desire union and friendship among Israel? Above all, let me remind you that it is incumbent upon every Israelite, male and female, to have his children instructed in the language of your nation, viz., the sacred tongue. . .

What nation is there on earth who have themselves neglected their language as, alas! we have neglected ours? If you were to open schools for instruction in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, which are both indispensable to Judaism, how strongly would you cement the union and enhance the felicity of faith and peace. Do not our Christian brethren,

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., p. 143.

14. Abigail Abarbanel Lindo, *Hebrew and English, and English and Hebrew Vocabulary* . . . also *Hebrew and English Dialogues* (London: Samuel Meldola, 5606-1846), p. iv.

(to their credit, be it mentioned,) after a thorough knowledge of their native tongue, still eagerly pursue the study of the Latin and Greek languages, because of the technical and philosophical terms met with in their literature? Much more so we, whose faith and literature is closely interwoven with those two languages; why should we not rather cultivate those precious plants in preference to vain toys of the imagination, which bear no fruit of joy but deep rooted discord and implacable hatred.¹⁵

In a similar fashion, Rabbi Alcalai, in 1852, published a pamphlet urging the adoption of the Hebrew language as a means of fostering national unity among Jews.¹⁶ The need for the revival of Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews was felt even by the semi-educated Sephardi. The following report, by Andrew Bonar, a missionary from the Church of Scotland, in 1839, illustrates our point:

He said that . . . They needed to be taught their own language, for none could speak Hebrew, and few understand it. If a school were instituted, he believed it would be well attended.¹⁷

It is important to note, in this connection, the upsurge of Hebrew grammars, such as *Darkhei No'am*, written in Judeo-Spanish by Rabbi Alcalai, and printed in Belgrade, 1839, and *Lehem Ha-Bikkurim*, by Rabbi Shaul Ha-Kohen (1772-1848) of Tunis. In the introduction to this last book, published in Leghorn in 1870, one of the reasons given for the work is that, among the nations, there is great interest in the proper studies of their respective languages. How much more so should this be with the Jewish people, whose very existence depends on their sacred literature. Moreover, Jews go through great efforts in order to instruct their children in foreign languages, when they are neglecting the study of Hebrew.

Another Hebrew grammar, this one in Judeo-Spanish, was put out by Rabbi Menaḥem Farḥi, with the complaint

that other spoken languages are further progressing, but our language is continuously losing ground. Therefore, I was determined to try to present before the students some of the principles of our Holy language in a special book. In this way, perhaps, some men of wisdom of our times, those who have the power to establish something that is well organized, will be able to benefit the youth of our people.¹⁸

Among the Jewish educators who centered their curricula around the study of Hebrew, special mention should be made of R. Barukh Miṭrani, whose efforts at the elementary school level, as well as the works that he

15. *Words of Peace and Truth* (London: Samuel Meldola, 5605-1845), pp. 13-14. This book is bi-lingual.

16. *Me'oded 'Anavim* (Leipzig: 5612-1852). See *Kitbei Ha-Rab Yehuda Alcalai*, ed. Y. Raphael, (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1970), vol. 2, p. 40.

17. Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray M'Cheyene, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews*, 3rd edition, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication), p. 380.

18. *Rab Pe'alim*, (Constantinople: 5640-1880).

composed for this purpose, make him a unique pioneer in this field of Jewish pedagogy.

Intimately connected with the efforts for the revival of Hebrew was the establishment of Hebrew magazines, such as *Dobeb Mesharim* and *Karmi* (bilingual: Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish).

III. *Political Repentance: The Return to Zion.*

Rabbi Yehuda Bibas was the first Jew in modern times to give full expression to the Zionist ideal and to show the significance of the return to the land of Israel. His Zionist ideals were grounded on his interpretation of the duty of *teshubah*, repentance, whose literal meaning is "return." *Teshubah* is operative at two levels. At the individual level, it is spiritual, and means the recognition and abandonment of sin, followed by a "return" to the ways of the Lord. However, Judaism also recognizes *teshubah* as a collective duty. At this level, it must be—by sheer definition—political.

The beginning of political *teshubah* is the "return" of the Jewish people in a physical and concrete sense to the Promised Land. This ideal is intimately related to the national conception of Judaism current in the Sephardic tradition, and the political dimension of *galut*: the spiritual redemption of Israel by God is predicated upon the political repentance of the Jewish people.¹⁹

Since repentance, as a collective duty, is essentially political, it depends on military means for its implementation. Rabbi Bibas saw in the Greek insurrection against the Turks (1821) a paradigm of how the Jews should take possession of their ancestral home. Therefore, he considered it of primary importance that "the people must first be educated and taught the sciences."²⁰ The Jew ought to acquire a wide humanistic education that would prepare him to face the complexities of modern society. In his view, proper education in the "seven wisdoms" in our times takes precedence over the study of Torah:

The seven wisdoms, or sciences, such as music, astronomy, etc., are meant. When a man is well, if he takes medicine it will do him harm; but if he will be ill, then he must put away bread and take the medicine. Now, the law is bread; but the Jews are sick, they are ignorant and degraded. You must therefore lay aside the study of the law and take the medicine, which is the seven wisdoms or sciences spoken of here.²¹

According to Rabbi Bibas, humanistic education would prepare the Jew to build a home in the Promised Land; in particular, he urged

19. Our presentation of Rabbi Bibas's ideology is based on quotations made by his most ardent follower, Rabbi Y. Alcalai. See *Kitbei ha-Rab Yehuda Alcalai*, vol. 1, pp. 20-99, 237, 238, 241, 276.

20. Bonar and M'Cheyene, p. 380.

21. Ibid.

the Jew to be trained in military science. In his view, it was the special role of the Messiah to conduct the war of conquest of the Holy Land. In referring to Rabbi Bibas, Bonar makes the following comment:

The young men [of Corfu] spoke with great admiration of him [R. Bibas] and of his sentiments, and especially of this one, that the Jews must be instructed in science and in arms, that they may wrest the land of Palestine from the Turks under the leadership of the Messiah, as the Greeks wrested their country.²²

Secular Zionism developed among Sephardim as early as 1839. In a conversation which took place in September 10, 1839, Bonar reports:

In conversation with the son [of Samuel Hillel, a Jewish banker of Corfu] we soon discovered that he was one of the Jews who care little about Palestine [in the traditional religious sense] and do not expect a Messiah, believing that education and civilization alone can exalt the Jews; to which he added—"a knowledge of arms, that they may defend their land when they get possession of it."²³

In this connection, it is pertinent to mention the activities of Joseph Marcou Baruch, who was born in Istanbul in 1872 and died in Florence in 1899. He was an idealist who devoted all of his life and energies to promote Jewish nationalistic feelings among his people. Like Rabbi Bibas, he believed that the Jews should make military preparations for the conquest of the Holy Land from the Turks. Because of these views, he was considered by many to be an "extremist," and was even branded an "anarchist".²⁴ This judgment may reflect the position formulated by

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., p. 392.

24. There is no systematic study of all the data, sources, and material related to the work, ideology, and publications of Baruch, though there is a romanticized account of his life: Jacob Weinschel, *Yosef Marcou Baruch*, (Tel-Aviv: 1949). Invaluable information on Baruch may be found in *Yehudei Ha-Mizrah Be-Erez Yisrael*, vol. 2, pp. 172-176. Mrs. Vicki Tamir, who has completed a volume of the History of the Jews in Bulgaria up to our days, sent me the following information on the impact of Baruch on Bulgarian Jewry:

In April, 1895, Yosef Marco Baruch, arrived in Sofia and, in the face of enormous obstacles erected in his path by the "notables" [the rich Jews of Bulgaria holding the reins of community life at that time], succeeded in creating peripatetic Zionist nuclei called Carmel I, Carmel II, Carmel III, etc., and in raising the necessary funds for the publication of a Zionist periodical, Carmel.

Eventually . . . Baruch left Bulgaria, but not without imprinting his example of revolutionary fervor in the hearts of the people. . . . Those who responded to Baruch's appeal for self-help, for denunciation of the anti-Semitic wave in Bulgaria and the inequities in Czarist Russia, for active struggle against the Sultan of Turkey dominating the Holy Land, and for an expanded Jewish national consciousness, came from all walks of life. One of them described Baruch, as he appeared at their first meeting to address them in French: "Pallid, emaciated, sloppily dressed, his shoes torn, his scalp clean-shaven . . . But when he stood up and spoke, we no longer saw his pitiful exterior. We just devoured every word he uttered . . ."

For the publication of Carmel, Yosef Marco Baruch sought the support of the father of Bulgarian letters, Ivan Vazov, to whom he subsequently dedicated a French language poem ("Merci, merci, noble poète!"—he exclaims), as well as that of Aleko Konstantinov, Bulgaria's foremost satirist, and even that of Prince Ferdinand, who sent him a donation of 100 leva.

Moses Mendelssohn that the Jew may not bear arms to take possession of the Promised Land.²⁵ This notion was never accepted by Sephardic Rabbis. To this issue, Rabbi Moshe Ya'acob Toledano (1880-1960) addressed himself in a *responsum*,²⁶ in which, without mentioning anybody by name, he dismissed the notion promoted by many rabbis that it is forbidden to the Jewish people to bear arms. Specifically, he demonstrated that it is the sacred duty of the Jewish people to take possession of the Promised Land, if necessary by the force of arms.

Rabbi Bibas, like all Sephardic religious and lay leaders, strongly supported Jewish settlement in the Holy Land, but he objected to the parasitic tendencies of the recipients of public charity there. In his opinion, it was incumbent upon the Jewish leadership to encourage the Jews living in Palestine to work and be self-supporting:

He [Rabbi Bibas] thought that the collections for the Holy Land ought to be given up, and that the Jews there ought to be obliged to work even were it by the bayonet.²⁷

Rabbi Alcalai was deeply affected by the personality and Zionist ideology of Rabbi Bibas, and devoted his entire life towards the development and implementation of his ideals. A detailed analysis of the numerous activities of Rabbi Alcalai and his Zionist ideology transcends the scope of this paper, but, for our purpose, it would be sufficient to point out some of his most significant projects. He believed in levying a tithe upon the Jewish people and, among the different projects to be financed by these funds, the following deserve special attention: the establishment of an organization to promote international recognition of the Jewish right to the Holy Land, a Jewish Parliament, a Jewish army, schools to teach the Hebrew language, Jewish settlements in the Holy Land, agricultural centers, etc.²⁸

Rabbi Bibas questioned the wisdom of purchasing land in Israel without first securing political autonomy. To this effect, he attempted to dissuade Sir Moses Montefiore on the grounds that:

Sir Moses Montefiore's plan of purchasing land for them [the Jews] in Palestine he [Rabbi Bibas] considered useless, as long as there is no security for property there. The people must first be educated and taught the sciences.²⁹

25. It was a natural extension of the concept of Judaism as a religion without any political dimension. This point was crucial in order to gain political emancipation, and it was adequately understood by Christians who supported Jewish Emancipation. See Comte de Mirabeau, *Sur Moses Mendelssohn, Sur La Reforme Politique des Juifs*, (London: 1787), p. 115.

26. *Ha-Yam Ha-gadol*, (Cairo: 5691-1931), pp. 180-186.

27. Bonar and M'Cheyene, p. 395.

28. For a brief summary of the main points of his ideology and career, see *Encyclopaedia of Religious Zionism* [Heb.] Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute: (1958), vol. 1, columns 134-140.

29. Bonar and M'Cheyene, p. 395.

Nevertheless, there was a strong support among the Sephardim for the establishment of a plan to purchase land in Palestine. In 1844, three years before Rabbi Alcalai made a similar proposal, Rabbi Ḥazzan had tried to persuade the Jews in Europe to purchase property in the Holy Land from the Arabs.³⁰ In 1858, twenty-six years before Schapira and thirty-nine years before the First Zionist Congress, Rabbi Ḥazzan pleaded with European Jewry to establish “a *Keren Kayyemet* for the purpose of purchasing property in the Holy Land.” In the following year he published a letter in the Hebrew journal, *Hamaggid* (III, no. 13), urging the Jewish people “to establish a *Keren Kayyemet* in order to buy away the property that the Arabs held in the Holy Land”.

A philological note will help us put the significance of this point in the proper perspective. Currently, the term *keren kayyemet* is used in the sense of a trust whose yield is to be used exclusively for a sacred purpose. However, originally, it referred to the spiritual reward of the *mizvot* in the world-to-come. In Sephardic literature the phrase is very commonly used in the former sense, while in Ashkenazic literature, *Keren Kayyemet* never appears in the sense of a trust of money.³¹ As a matter of fact, the term *Keren Kayyemet* in its current popular sense could have developed only in a Sephardic community, since it is a translation of the technical Arabic term, *waqf*.

These Sephardic ideals of national Zionism were deeply rooted among the lay leaders and the masses. Distinguished men of the stature of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), Count Abraham de Camondo (1785-1873) and Shemaya Angel (1810-1874)—to mention just a few—used their financial and diplomatic resources to help their co-religionists establish a home in the Promised Land. At the same time, members of some of the most prominent Sephardic families, such as Yahuda, Manni, Agha Baba, Naḥum, Picciotto, and others responded to the call of Zionism and emigrated to Palestine. Up to the 19th century, the majority of the Jews living in the Holy Land were Sephardim,³² though Ashkenazic Jewry also responded to the call of Zionism. The major waves of emigration from Eastern Europe are usually designated as the First Aliyah (1882-1903) and the Second (1904-1918) Aliyah. However, many of those emigrating at that time were Sephardim, though there

30. See the article of Rabbi Ḥazzan in the *Hamaggid*, III (No. 13).

31. In Rabbinic Hebrew, *keren* refers also to “a sum of money, a capital.” In this sense it is used by Ashkenazic Rabbis. Occasionally, one finds the expression “*ha-keren yihyeh kayyam*”; i.e. “it should remain intact.” The expression *keren kayyemet* is used by Ashkenazic Rabbis only in the sense that it appears in Rabbinic literature.

32. In the census taken in 1839, only 26.2% of the Jewish population was Ashkenazic (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 9, col. 497). It is important to note that the numbers of Jews in Palestine in the following 75 years are based on *estimates* and need to be carefully examined in the light of all of the available data.

are no precise figures of the numbers of immigrants coming in these waves. Interestingly, in the census taken in Israel in November 1948, there were 3,192 survivors from the first wave of immigration, of whom about 50% were Sephardim. Specifically: 1172 came from Asia, 201 from Africa, and 141 from Greece and Yugoslavia. There were 9,136 survivors of the second wave, of whom 3600 were Sephardim: 2985 from Asia, 440 from Africa, and 175 from Greece and Yugoslavia.³³ These numbers are particularly significant in view of the fact that by the end of the 19th century the Sephardim were only 8% of the entire Jewish population.

Finally, a note that may help us come to a better understanding of the Sephardi in his relation to the host country, to the Jewish nation, and to the Holy Land.³⁴ No matter how well the Sephardi integrated in the host country, he felt himself, somehow, in *galut*. He yearned for the time when he could be fully part of the Jewish nation, and live in the Holy Land. Grace Aguilar was a Jewess who enjoyed the privileges of Victorian society, and, yet, she was a stranger, an exile longing for her home. She lamented that Jerusalem was in Moslem hands, and she prayed for the day when the Lord would redeem the remnants of Judah. Here are a few lines from her poem, "A Vision of Jerusalem", that she composed upon visiting a Christian shrine:

I stood ALONE 'mid thronging crowds who fill'd that stranger shrine,
For there were none who kept the faith I hold to dearly mine:
An exile felt I, in that house, from Israel's native sod,
An exile yearning for my home,—yet loved still by my God.
No exile from His love! No, no: though captive I may be,
And I must weep whene'er I think, my fatherland, on thee!
Jerusalem! my beautiful! my own! I feel thee still,
Though for our sins thy sainted sod the Moslem strangers fill. . . .
Alas, my country! thou must yet deserted rest and lone,
Thy glory, loveliness, and life, a Father's gifts, are flown!
Oh that my prayers could raise thee radiant from the sod,
And turn from Judah's exiled sons their God's avenging rod!³⁵

33. M. Sicron and B. Gil, *Statistical Abstract of Israel* (Jerusalem), 1957, p. 20.

34. In my view, Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power* (Penguin Books), pp. 208-209, when referring to the "ultimate nature of the bond they feel when they say 'I am a Jew'" gave full expression to the feeling of "the Hebrew nation" and *galut* that is so much a part of the Sephardic mind.

35. *The Spirit of Judaism*, p. 221.

Divine Need and Human Wonder: The Philosophy of Abraham J. Heschel

MAURICE FRIEDMAN

Devotional Philosophy

THERE ARE FEW WORKS ON RELIGION BY MODERN

American writers that can compare with Heschel's writings in depth of religious insight, intensity of concern, or beauty of style. His religious thinking is of a genuinely existential nature, deriving from, and referring back to, actual religious life—"that which is immediately given with the pious man." "In the realm of the spirit," he writes, "only he who is a pioneer is able to be an heir." To be an heir is to make religious tradition alive for oneself and for those around one, and this demands a spiritual creativity that can arise only from the depths of an individual and genuine religious life. The rare quality of Heschel's own religious life—its dedicated intensity, poetic sensitivity, and serious concern—expressed itself again and again in passages in which artistic creativity, religious feeling, and mystical intuition are integrally united.

Heschel's style is evocative of devotional literature or religious poetry—the prose of Thomas Traherne, the poetry of Francis Thompson or of William Blake. "What is intelligible to our mind is but a thin surface of the profoundly undisclosed, a ripple of inveterate silence that remains immune to curiosity and inquisitiveness like distant foliage in the dusk." "The universe is a score of eternal music and we are the cry, we are the voice." "There is so much light in our cage, in our world, it is as if it were suspended amidst the stars. Apathy turns to splendor unawares." "Inspiration passes; having been inspired remains . . . like an island across the restlessness of time, to which we move over the wake of undying wonder." Men of faith "plant sacred thoughts in the uplands of time—the secret gardeners of the Lord in mankind's desolate hopes." In its startling imagery and paradoxical use of words the style resembles those of John Donne and T. S. Eliot. "Things are bereft of triteness." "They hear the stillness that crowds the world in spite of our noise." "We are rarely aware of the tangent of the beyond at the whirling wheel of experience." "Religion . . . comes to light . . . in moments of discerning the indestructibly sudden within the perishably constant." "Faith is a blush in the presence of God."

Heschel's style is of one piece, however, and it is unique. Although his metaphors and language have an energy of their own which some-

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times bursts the bounds of the thought, his unusual precision is not the connotative precision of poetry alone. For all its beauty, his style is never truly lyrical. It is always, at its most startling, in the service of intuitive or discursive thought. As a result, nothing simply flows freely; everything is carried out with great spiritual tension and devotion and the most careful workmanship. "Wonder is not a state of aesthetic enjoyment," Heschel appropriately remarks. "Endless wonder is endless tension, a situation in which we are shocked at the inadequacy of our awe."

Heschel and the Modern Jew

In *Man Is Not Alone*, writes one critic, Heschel "created a climate of religious ecstasy for those already committed." Actually, *Man Is Not Alone* has as much power to speak to the unconvinced as does any book that American Jewish thought has produced. The atmosphere of the style, to be sure, breathes faith rather than scepticism, wonder rather than rational doubt; but its faithfulness in the first instance is to the wonder itself. Thus, it becomes a fitting instrument for conveying new meaning to the minds of the "unconvinced" who cannot grasp such new meaning through abstract concepts but only through full-bodied symbols in which the intellectual is integrated with the intuitive and the emotional. To the "convinced," the abstract concept is sometimes adequate since he understands to what it refers, but to the unconvinced and uncommitted such short-cuts are not possible. Heschel appeals to those who "want to taste the whole wheat of the spirit before it is ground by the millstones of reason."

He offers an insight into genuine religious experience that may aid the modern Jew in attaining a real personal relation to his religion as well as a national-cultural identification. His philosophy of religion does not begin with dogma or the law or with recapitulation of classic proofs of the existence of God, but with that sense of wonder and of the ineffable that belongs, in greater or lesser measure, to every person's experience, even though "our normal consciousness is in a sense of stupor, in which our sensibility to the wholly real is reduced." Only then does it move toward that transcendent reality to which each finite thing alludes through its own unique and non-repeatable reality.

For all its poetic quality, Heschel's style is always an instrument of his thought. The startling combinations of words bring new insights to light and force us beyond the hackneyed to something of that sense of wonder and awareness of the ineffable which is, to Heschel, the first major step in religious life and thought. His style also helps us retain this awareness; for, as he writes, "Even when our thinking about the ultimate question takes place on a discursive level, our memory must remain moored to our perceptions of the ineffable."

Heschel does not disparage knowledge and reason. He recognizes, as most philosophers do, that they are not ultimate, that they rest on intuitions, attitudes, and assumptions which cannot be subjected to proof. "The tree of knowledge grows on the soil of mystery." Wonder, rather than doubt, is the root of philosophy, for only the sense of the ineffable leads us to meaning—meaning which can never be fully expressed but only indicated.

Polarity

The logical structure in Heschel's writings is not easily perceptible, because his style is poetic and his philosophy mystical and intuitive. The difficulty is further increased by the fact that Heschel's thought is dialectical and even paradoxical in nature. Although his individual insights have value in themselves, none of them can be taken as expressing the whole of his philosophy. As a result, it is difficult to grasp the total import of his thought. "Polarity is an essential trait of all things," he writes. Jewish prayer, for example, is guided by the opposite principles of

order and outburst, regularity and spontaneity, uniformity and individuality, law and freedom, a duty and a prerogative, empathy and self-expression, insight and sensitivity, creed and faith, the word and that which is beyond words.

If he states in one passage that our relationship to God "is not as an I to a Thou, but as a We to a Thou," he also refers us by a footnote to another passage in which he says,

It is true that a Jew never worships as an isolated individual but *as a part of the Community of Israel*. Yet it is within the heart of every individual that prayer takes place.

In explicit reference to this issue of polarity, Heschel said to me, "What underlies my thinking is something I proved and demonstrated extensively in the two Hebrew volumes of *Torah Min Shamayim*." In this impressive study of Talmudic Judaism, Heschel deals with the two schools of interpretation of Rabbi Akiba and of Rabbi Ishmael and shows that the contrast between them is one that carries through the whole of Rabbinic Judaism. "Jewish thinking moves along two paths," Heschel said to me, "that of critical reasoning and that of imaginative intuition—Maimonides and Yehuda Halevi, the Baal-Shem-Tov and Moses Mendelssohn. I am both," he asserted. "I live these two trends. I am neither a rationalist nor an irrationalist."

Heschel lived his whole life in the tension between the positive life affirmation of the Baal-Shem-Tov and the Kierkegaardian anguish of Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Kotzk. If he kept the link with the centuries of Jewish faith through the "mines of meaning" inherited from the Baal-Shem, he also kept the link with the modern world through the "im-

mense mountains of absurdity" placed in his way by Mendel of Kotzk. If the former taught him compassion and mercy and made dark hours luminous, the latter eased wretchedness and desolation by forewarnings and premonitions of Auschwitz. The Kotzker debunked cherished attitudes and warned of the peril of forfeiting authenticity even while the Baal-Shem helped Heschel to refine his sense of immediate mystery and gave him the gift of elasticity in adapting to contradictory conditions.

The polarity of Heschel's thought, the mosaic of individual insights, and the tendency to stress now one point of view and now another—all these make the task of the responsible interpreter and critic a difficult one. The reader of Heschel's works will avoid much misunderstanding if he will look, in the first instance, not for a system but for central insights, and then move outward from these insights to the structure of Heschel's thought. This structure might better be compared to the concentric circles that are produced when a stone is thrown into a pool than to the precise architectonic that one finds in more systematic philosophies of religion, such as Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*. For this reason, it is essential that we suspend any *final* conclusions about Heschel's thought until we have seen not only the stone falling into the pool but the outermost concentric rings.

The Awareness of the Ineffable

It is not through logic and reason that we come to know God, writes Heschel, but through the awareness of the ineffable. Insights into the ineffable are "the root of man's creative activities in art, thought and noble living." It is radical amazement at what is, the distinction between what may be uttered and what is unutterable, that most distinguishes man from the animals. We encounter the ineffable as a powerful presence outside us, a spiritual suggestiveness of reality which gives certainty without knowledge. The ineffable is the something more in all things which gives them transcendent significance. It is an allusiveness of all being which teaches us that "to be is to stand for." From the hiddenness of things we come to "the mystery of our own presence" and learn that the self also is not something we own but "something transcendent in disguise." The awareness of the ineffable is not an aesthetic experience in which one may rest. It is a question that God asks of us, and the question and our response are the beginning of religion. Thus, through wonder, we come to the awareness of God "in which the ineffable in us communes with the ineffable beyond us."

God Needs Man

God, to Heschel, is One, and one means not just the only God, but unique, incomparable, indivisible. One means that God alone is truly

real, uniting mercy and law, that He is within us and within all things. "God means: *Togetherness of all beings in holy otherness.*" But this does not mean that all is God or that all is one. Heschel's philosophy is not a pantheism, but a panentheism in which God and man work together to bring about the unification of God and the world. Evil is divergence and confusion, that which divides man from man and man from God, "while good is *convergence, togetherness, union.*" God is striving to be one with the world, His transcendent essence is striving to become one with His immanent presence, His Shekhinah. But there is here no radical dualism of good and evil, natural and supernatural. In responding to God we find Him near to us. The world is not cut off from God, for His presence lingers, and through this presence we may sanctify all physical life and raise it to the beyond. "It is His otherness, ineffable and immediate as the air we breathe and do not see, which enables us to sense His distant nearness."

We are embraced by God's inner life. We know only our relation with God, and we discover this relation when we perceive ourselves as perceived by Him and respond to His demand. God is characterized above all by His compassionate concern for every individual man and for every thing. The essence of religion, particularly the Jewish religion, according to Heschel, is a reciprocal relationship in which God binds himself as well as man, and man has rights as well as God. Not only does God need man, but it is His need of us and our need to be needed which gives meaning to our lives. Opening ourselves to God, we share in His concern for all things. The existence of man is tridimensional. Our regard for ourselves is coupled with a regard for others because of the holy dimension which embraces both. We are not bound to self-interest alone, for our awareness of the ineffable shows the absurdity of making the ego an end. Neither the flesh nor self-regard is evil but only absence of concern for others, and we attain concern for others through responding to the divine demand on us for mercy, justice, and love. "True love of man is clandestine love of God."

Faith, Piety, Prayer, and Deeds

Faith, to Heschel, is keeping our responsiveness alive "in a passionate care for the marvel that is everywhere." This faith expresses itself in the dedicated intention which we bring to every moment and to every action, no matter how trivial it may seem. Faith is faithfulness to the encounter with God, the faithfulness of tradition handed down through generations and the faithfulness of the individual who inherits that tradition through his own spiritual pioneering. Creed and dogma are of value only if they claim not to formulate but to allude. When the human side of religion—its creeds, rituals, and institutions—"becomes

the goal, injustice becomes a way." "A minimum of creed and a maximum of faith is the ideal synthesis." Man stands before God not for the duration of a ritual but for life, and God is concerned for the whole of our life, our joys and griefs, our physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Religious consciousness is characterized by the consciousness of *ultimate commitment* and the consciousness of *ultimate reciprocity*. This consciousness is, in Heschel's opinion, best embodied in Judaism, the essence of which is the partnership of man and God in unifying God and the world. Through this partnership all needs are spiritual opportunities. The self and passion, accordingly, are to be neither denied nor simply affirmed, but turned to the service of God. Only if we ally our religious aspirations with our strongest passions will we have a force capable of freeing us from our exclusive concern with the ego.

Life passes on in proximity to the sacred, and it is this proximity that endows existence with ultimate significance. . . . Perhaps the essential message of Judaism is that in doing the finite we may perceive the infinite.

Piety, to Heschel, is "a perpetual inner attitude of the whole man, the orientation of human inwardness toward the holy." It is not a subjective feeling but a relation to the divine beyond oneself—a relation of openness, responsiveness, mindfulness, of reciprocal giving, sacrifice for God, and allegiance to God's will, in short, "a life compatible with God's presence." The pious man is equally concerned for great and small because he senses the divine care that is invested in each thing, and yet for this same reason he will not give way to gloom, for he sees a gift of God in all that comes to him. The pious man desires to give back to God, and to him death is a privilege, for he can make of it an "ultimate self-dedication to the divine" through which he reciprocates for God's gift of life. For this same reason the pious man is not concerned about personal immortality and personal salvation. The lasting is not the self but what the self stands for.

The greatest problem is not how to continue but how to exalt our existence. . . . Eternity is not perpetual future but perpetual presence.

"Prayer," he writes, in *Man's Quest for God*, "is an invitation to God to intervene in our lives." It is an event in which man surpasses himself. "Prayer may not save us, but prayer makes us worth saving." God is not a means to our individual and social ends nor is prayer the road to enriching the self in either a material or a spiritual sense. "God is of no importance unless He is of supreme importance." This means that God cannot be regarded as an extension of the self or of human civilization. Religion becomes a useful fiction at the point when it no longer sees man in relationship to God but to the symbol of his highest ideals. "In earlier times," writes Heschel, "symbolism was regarded as a form of *religious thinking*; in modern times religion is regarded as a

form of *symbolic thinking*." Like the "religious behaviorism" which preserves the externals of religious tradition for their own sake, this "symbolic thinking" preserves the idea of God, but empties it of any reality independent of its usefulness to society or to man's personal well-being.

Time, Space, and Reality

In *The Sabbath*, Heschel contrasts the Jewish view that space is contained in time with the more common view that time is contained in space. "It is the world of space which is rolling through the infinite expanse of time." The world of space is constantly perishing while time, through which it moves, is everlasting. The things of space, which ordinarily dominate our vision of the world, conceal the Creator through their deceptive appearance of independence and permanence. Time, on the other hand, reveals the Creator, for through it we intuit the process of creation.

It is the dimension of time wherein man meets God, wherein man becomes aware that every instant is an act of creation, a Beginning, opening up new roads for ultimate realizations. Time is the presence of God in the world of space.

We are called upon to sanctify our life in time rather than in the symbols of space, for the source of time is eternity. The secret of the world's coming into being is the presence of the Giver in the given. "To the spiritual eye space is frozen time, and all things are petrified events."

In *Man's Quest for God*, Heschel's emphasis again falls on the dynamic event rather than on the static object. The central religious event is the meeting with God and the actions and way of life that grow out of that meeting.

The uniqueness of the Bible is in disclosing the will of God in plain words, in telling us of the presence of God in history rather than in symbolic signs or mythic events.

Judaism does not understand God's will as a set of abstract, universal principles which exist apart from history and which need only be applied by the individual to particular historical situations. God speaks to man in history, and His revelation in history gives us direct knowledge of His will.

This centrality of time informs all of Heschel's writings. In *God In Search of Man*, he contrasts the tendency to look on history as unbroken process with the Biblical understanding of history as event, and, therefore, as a creative breakthrough of presentness, discontinuous and, just for that reason, ever in need of being remembered and renewed. In *The Prophets*, Heschel shows the "divine pathos" as bound to the events of history and the prophets' "sympathy" with that pathos as a response

to, and judgment of, the events of their time. In one of his last books, *Israel. An Echo of Eternity*, he sets the coming-to-be of the State of Israel and its significance, not only for Jews, but for world history, within this context of the sacredness of events in time. "Genuine history occurs," he writes, "when the events of the present disclose the meaning of the past and offer an anticipation of the promise of the future."

Ceremonies and Mitzvoth

In his discussion of tradition and the law in *Man's Quest for God*, Heschel makes a general distinction between "ceremonies"—conventional folkways which are relevant to men—and *mitzvoth*—requirements of the Torah which are ways of God. Ceremonies, like symbols, express *what we think* while the *mitzvoth* express *what God wills*. This distinction seems of special importance as it applies to the motive for religious observance. What is done merely for the sake of keeping alive the tradition or of continuing Jewish culture and civilization can hardly be called "religious" in any meaningful sense of the term. But can one apply this distinction with equal clarity to the content of the action itself so that one can say in each particular case, this is a subjective folkway and that an objective command of God? "Survival of Israel means that we carry on our independent dialogue with the past," writes Heschel. "Our way of life must remain such as would be, to some degree, intelligible to Isaiah and Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, to Maimonides and the Baal-Shem." But how can we be sure that our relation to the past is a genuine dialogue—at once really receptive and really independent? By concentrating not on the "how much" of observance but on the how, says Heschel, by realizing that a little with *kavanah* is better than much without.

This answer is at once satisfying and puzzling. In its insistence on holding on to both inwardness and the law, it is faithful to Biblical and normative Judaism, even while reminding us of the polarity of Heschel's thought. But it does not appear to answer the question of how one distinguishes, in particular cases, between subjective folkway and objective command. If a little with *kavanah* is better than much without, then the subjective-objective distinction that Heschel makes is not the crucial one. The real question becomes whether our way of life is not only part of a genuine dialogue with the past, but of a genuine dialogue with God, within which both subjective motive and objective law find their meaning.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

In trying to avoid the dangers of subjectivism, "pan-psychology," and ego-centeredness Heschel frequently goes to the opposite extreme of

treating meaning and value as "objective" realities outside of man to which man merely responds. To make this point even clearer, he speaks of God as the subject and man as the object. "The structure which most characterizes Heschel's religious thought," writes Edward J. Kaplan, "is his *displacement of subjectivity* from man to God."¹ This "subject-object" terminology appears incompatible with Heschel's dominant theme of a genuinely reciprocal relationship between God and man. His assertion that the "I" is an "it" to God cannot be reconciled with his statement that God is compassionately concerned for the fate and the needs of every individual. If we are, in fact, embraced by the inner life of God, this does not mean that God thinks of us as we think of an object, but, rather, that God relates to us as persons in the realest sense of the term.

On the other hand, Heschel as often places the center of value in the relation between man and what is outside him as in the "objective" taken by itself. He speaks of values as independent realities "that reflect objective *requiredness*," only later to state that our conception of these values may change but not our sense of being committed to values. In the former statement, the value seems to be *there* and we merely respond to it. But, in the latter, value lies not in the objective demand taken by itself but in the relationship through which this demand is placed on us. The value *is*, in fact, the relation, as Heschel has shown by defining good as togetherness of man and God, man and man, and man and the world. He sets the human, or subjective, side of religion over against God's side; yet he also tells us that we do not know God in His essence but only in what He demands of us, which means our relation with Him.

In *Man Is Not Alone*, Heschel seeks at times to show the reality of piety by speaking of its spiritual content as universal and of piety itself as "an objective spiritual way of thinking and living." Yet he also stresses the individual and existential character of piety by saying, in the same chapter, "Piety stands entirely within the subjective and originates in human initiative." The contradiction between these two statements cannot be resolved within the framework of the subjective-objective thinking on which Heschel here relies. It can be resolved only by transcending this thinking, as Heschel himself does in still a third statement in this chapter:

Piety is . . . not only a sense for the reality of the transcendent but for the taking of an adequate attitude toward it; not only a vision, a way to believe, but adjustment, the answer to a call, a mode of life.

1. Edward J. Kaplan, "Language and Reality in Abraham J. Heschel's Philosophy of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XLI, 1, (March, 1973): 111. Professor Kaplan's essay (pp. 94-113) is a particularly fine and sensitive appreciation of Heschel, both as poet and prophet, and of the role of religio-poetic language in evoking profound and mutual trans-subjective understanding and response.

The reality of piety that is set forth in this last statement is the reality of dialogue—not the non-reciprocal relation of a subject to an object but the reciprocal relation of an “I” to a “Thou.”

While Heschel's stress on the objectivity of the life of the spirit is in part a matter of counter-emphasis, it also results in part from a tendency to remove all reality from the self to God. We are, he says, a “possession” of God, and our value resides not in ourselves but in what we stand for. Our essence does not possess the right to say “I,” for what we call self is a monstrous deceit—something transcendent in disguise. Will, freedom, life, and consciousness are imposed on us. “What is an ‘I’ to our minds is an ‘it’ to God.” Heschel speaks of the presence of God as within man as well as beyond him. But unless man's self can be identified, in some real way, with this inner presence, the communion of “the ineffable within” with “the ineffable beyond” cannot be a real meeting of God and man. A genuinely reciprocal relationship demands that man regard himself neither as God's “possession” nor as an “object” of his thought, but as a really free and responsible person—a partner in dialogue.

“I do not really mean,” Heschel explained to me, “that we have no right to say I. But we have the right to say I only when we understand that the I is transcendence in disguise.” When we deal with the mystery of self-consciousness, we must recognize that instead of self-consciousness lending meaning to all consciousness, as Husserl held, it is, itself, in need of transcendent meaning. “To say that the I is an ‘it’ to God does not mean that God regards us as an it. The I is an ‘it’ in the light of *our* awareness of God.” Therefore, Heschel felt that my objection applied to what he *said* but not to what he meant. He felt that the concept of the “subjectivity of God” enabled him to combine two important ideas—the absolute transcendence of God *and* the idea of the “divine pathos”—God's sharing in the suffering and history of man.²

“To Be Is to Stand For”

We must recognize, however, that this tendency in Heschel's thought is only a tendency and not a dominant theme. The real essence of what Heschel is saying here, as elsewhere, is that “to be is to stand for.” Taken positively, this is a statement which many are willing to accept as a faithful and creative expression of Judaism's understanding of the relation

2. From five pages of notes taken during a visit to Heschel at his office in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York in the fall or early winter of 1971-72. Heschel's comments were in response to the long monograph which is the original version of this essay, which has since been published in Hebrew translation in Israel in Volume II of *Spiritual Contributions of American Jewry* (Jerusalem: Brit Ivrit Olamit, 1973), and of the companion paper, “Abraham Heschel Among Contemporary Philosophers: From Divine Pathos to Prophetic Action,” printed in *Philosophy Today*, XVIII, 4/4 (Winter 1974) : 293-305.

of man to God. God is not a means to our ends, and our value does not reside in ourselves alone. We are the creatures of a Creator who creates the world anew at every moment. We live by His grace, and even our freedom is sustained in that grace. We discover God's presence through the ineffable that we encounter in all things, and in our response to the ineffable we know ourselves as known by God. We find the meaning of our lives not in ourselves, therefore, but in our relation to what transcends us. This also means, however, that our "being" is as real as our "standing for," that we are no mere instrument or tool of God. We become ourselves only through relation to what is more than ourselves. But it is only *through* our becoming ourselves, each of us in his own unique particularity and his own concrete situation, that our lives take on transcendent meaning.

Philosophy of Judaism

In *God in Search of Man*, Heschel formulates a method of "depth theology" which endeavors to rediscover the questions to which religion is an answer, to employ "situational thinking" rather than concepts, to challenge philosophy and not merely to serve as an object for its examination. Speculation is a question *about* God; religion, a question *from* God. Hence, the former is impersonal and general; the latter related to the person and to what God asks of him. At stake in the problem of God is the problem of man—his spiritual meaning and relevance. The three trails that lead man to God, according to Heschel, are sensing God's presence in the world, in the Bible, and in sacred deeds. The three parts of Heschel's book correspond to these trails: God (in the world), Revelation (Torah), Response (*mitzvot* or commandments).

"Indifference to the sublime wonder of living is the root of sin," he writes. Awe precedes faith and is the root of it, for it is "an intuition for the creaturely dignity of all things and their preciousness to God." Revelation, for Heschel, is human and divine at once. "Prophetic words are never detached from the concrete, historic situation." And the revelation is not of God's very self but of His relation to history. Revelation is a dialogue in which the prophet is an active partner, and the Bible is a record of both revelation and response. "More decisive than the origin of the Bible in God is the presence of God in the Bible," which we cannot sense except by our response to it. And this also means the life of the people, uniquely committed through the Covenant to becoming a holy people. Man imitates God through walking in His ways of mercy and righteousness, for the only image of God that we can make is our own life as an image of His will. "Life consists of endless opportunities to sanctify the profane, to redeem the power of God from the chain of potentialities."

Agreement of the heart with the spirit of the law, not only with the letter of it, is itself a requirement of the law. Above all, the Torah asks for love—love of God and love of neighbor—and all observance is training in the art of love. Ritual and *mitzvot* must be carried out with both body and soul. “Thoughts, feelings, ensconced in the inwardness of man, deeds performed in the absence of the soul are incomplete.” Outward performance is but an aspect of the totality of a deed. “God asks for the heart,” for *kavanah*—that inner intention which redirects the whole person to God. But the way to *kavanah* is through the deed. The meaning of the order of Jewish living can be comprehended only in participation and response. “All *mitzvot* are means of evoking in us the awareness of living in the neighborhood of God, of living in the holy dimension.” Here is the practical, if not the philosophical, link between Heschel’s general philosophy of religion, which stresses the awareness of the ineffable, and his specific philosophy of Judaism.

The Christian dichotomy of faith and works has never been an important problem of Judaism, writes Heschel, for Judaism is concerned with right living in which deed and thought are bound into one. Religion or ethics comes to grief when it emphasizes motive alone and stresses purity of heart to the exclusion of the purpose and substance of the good action. “What man does in his concrete, physical existence is directly relevant to the divine.”

Heschel frequently falls into a tendency to identify his categories and symbols of the ineffable with the ineffable itself. “The categories of religious thinking . . . are unique,” he writes, and “on a level that is . . . immediate, ineffable, metasymbolic.” But “categories of religious thinking” are already, as such, a step beyond the “awareness of something that can be neither conceptualized nor symbolized.” “Religious thinking is in perpetual danger of giving primacy to concepts and dogmas and to forfeit the immediacy of insights.” Yet “insights” are not themselves immediate even if they are derived more directly from the awareness of the ineffable than concepts. The fact that he is referring to a metasymbolic reality leads Heschel to regard the images that he uses to point toward that reality as themselves beyond the symbolic. He overlooks the possibility that, here, too, there may exist that “profound disparity . . . between experience and expression” of which he is so acutely aware in connection with concepts.

This may account, in part, for what will seem to some readers to be an unprepared transition from the sense of the ineffable to an acceptance of the unique authority of the Bible and the sacredness of Jewish law in which Heschel identifies the voice of God with objective tradition. He does not show sufficient recognition of the tension that may arise in the relationship of the sense of the ineffable to the inherited form. “The

claim of Israel must be recognized *before* attempting an interpretation," he writes, ignoring the fact that our acceptance of this claim already necessarily involves an interpretation. He tends, moreover, to divide revelation and observance into an objective form supplied by the tradition and a subjective spiritual content supplied by our inner response. God "gave us the text and we refine and complete it," he says. "The word is but a clue; the real burden of understanding is upon the mind and soul of the reader." The reasons that he gives for accepting the traditional form tend to fall into this same objective-subjective dichotomy: sometimes it is because it is the will of God and sometimes because through the order of Jewish living one can sense the presence of God.

Finally, aside from repeated assertion, Heschel gives no real answer to the question which he himself raises of how we know that what is subjectively true—the sense of the ineffable—is transsubjectively real, that is, genuinely alludes to, or derives from, the transcendent. "The indication of what transcends all things is given to us with the same immediacy as the things themselves," he writes in a central statement in *Man Is Not Alone*. But, in *God in Search of Man* he recognizes that *the assertion* that God is real transcends our preconceptual awareness of the ineffable. In his first attempt to answer this question he speaks of our belief in God's reality as "an ontological presupposition" that questions the self and goes behind self-consciousness. But this ontological presupposition seems to be only another name for the awareness of the ineffable itself. He later states that the "standard by which to test the veracity of religious insights" must be an idea, not an event, "a supreme idea in human thinking, a universal idea," and he offers as this standard the idea of "*oneness or love.*" However, in the chapter on "One God" in *Man Is Not Alone*, to which he refers us, Heschel shows that what he really means is no mere conception. He rejects oneness as an abstract, universal idea in favor of an understanding of God as "*togetherness of all beings in holy otherness.*" Such "togetherness" can perhaps be verified *in the life* of the person and his relations to others, but it cannot be abstracted into a universal standard or test by which *objectively* to verify one's religious insights. Both the moment of insight, which is the power of religious truth, and the oneness or love, which is its content, "may be conveyed in one word: *transcendence.*" But this would seem to beg the question. How do we know that our insight *is* the product of the impact of transcendence, that its "love" is not a subjective emotion, its "oneness" not an abstract idea? The answer that Heschel offers to this central question which he himself raises seems to be either an abstract universality that contradicts his emphasis on events and on immediacy, or a reassertion that carries no added knowledge value. This in no way invalidates his basic religious insight that transcendent mean-

ing is immediately given to us in our meeting with existence. But it does raise a question as to how fully he has succeeded in converting this insight into a consistent philosophy of religion. Heschel himself said to me that there is no answer to that question; for "you cannot epistemologically and logically demonstrate the transcendent by immanent means." The important link for Heschel is that the "ineffable beyond" is known *with the same immediacy* as the "ineffable within."

The primary difficulty of the modern Jew, Heschel rightly observes, is not his inability to comprehend the *divine origin* of the law, but his inability to sense the presence of divine meaning in the fulfillment of the law. But the modern Jew's sense of the ineffable does not necessarily lead him to follow Heschel in accepting the prescriptions of the law as an objective order of divine will. The presence of divine meaning in observance of the law comes to us through our very commitment to, and participation in, that observance, says Heschel. But if we who are not observant Jews do not *now* feel ourselves commanded by God to perform the law, how can we perform it with integrity even on the strength of Heschel's assurance that we *shall* know this to be God's will for us through our observance?

Heschel clearly sees the dilemma of the modern Jew who "cannot accept the way of static obedience as a shortcut to the mystery of the divine will." Although he does not see the dilemma enough from within to build a bridge to Jewish law for most liberal Jews, his thought is, and will increasingly be, one of the richest sources for liberal Judaism's confrontation both with modern religious thought and with the whole range of the Jewish tradition.

A Theological Case Study From Israel

SINAI UCKO

FOUR WOMEN WERE RESTING IN THE SAME ISRAELI hospital ward. It was the eve of the Sabbath—and one of the four, indeed the only one—asked the nurse for candles which she might light in honor of the Sabbath. Much later, when she began to fall asleep, and was fearful of the possibility of fire, she extinguished the candles. At that very moment, the three other women who had not even considered the possibility of lighting candles cried out with a single voice “forbidden, forbidden.”

The first woman was thinking of the difference between the sacred and the profane; the other three saw before them the halakhah, which was still binding and powerful despite the fact that they did not observe it. The outcry, if we may label it as such, is a theoretical one. Is it possible to justify it as the inertia of thought? If such be the case, perhaps this theoretical habit of thought is that which should interest us because it constitutes, in miniature, a major aspect of the spiritual situation in Israel.

* * *

At the beginning of the Second Aliyah, which, in many ways decisively delineated the spiritual aspect of the succeeding decades, there was a severe crisis with regard to the Jewish tradition. For the youth of this Aliyah and also for that of the Third, Jewish tradition exemplified Exile. The fact that our contemporaries are once again in search of their Judaism is almost completely incomprehensible to these generations, but such is the case. In terms of their feelings, the young people of the Second and Third Aliyot not only turned away from the tradition but attacked it.

We must, in as precise and definite a manner as possible, try to understand these young people. Have we not ourselves claimed, and quite often, that the *mizvot* of performance (*mizvot ma-asivot*) were a defense wall in the preservation of the Jewish people in the Diaspora? Have we not stated that the halakhah is a portable homeland for the Jewish people, a strong fortress fending off assimilation while itself being suffused with holiness and piety? But to those who returned to the homeland, this portable fatherland seemed superfluous at the very moment when their feet touched the actual soil of Israel. Of course, here and

This article was translated from the Hebrew by DAVID WOLF SILVERMAN.

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there, some reminiscence of past holiness would be remembered. In general, however, the hatred of Exile triumphed over nostalgia and the *mizvot* of performance were brusquely discarded.

The writer of these lines remembers full well his first Yom Kippur in Israel many years ago. "When I left my home that morning I saw in the opposite courtyard a woman chopping wood to heat the bath water. Manual labor on Yom Kippur! To me, a Western Jew, who had found his way back to Judaism with some difficulty—this was a revolting surprise."

With this as background let us return to the four women whom we left in the hospital: the one who kindled the lights and transgressed afterwards and the three who did not kindle yet cried out, "forbidden, forbidden." The latter protested against the extinguishing, against the snuffing out of the candles, but never considered the possibility of their lighting Sabbath candles. Both matters, the protest and the refusal to act, stemmed from the same source; they viewed the commandments as a single monolithic set. If one stone is withdrawn from the structure, the entire building is thereby destroyed and since they, i.e., the three women, had already withdrawn many stones, it was not befitting that they observe the commandment concerning Sabbath candles. But the first woman, the one who had kindled the lights and later transgressed, had a definite sensitivity for the holiness of the Sabbath and its sanctified rest; this sensibility found its expression in the candles which stood next to her bedside. Only at a much further distance did she see the complete structure of the *Shulhan Arukh*.

We have here a transformation of the concept of Commander and commanded to that of the elevating symbol. Man has the power to select and choose from the wide and rich world of the commandments. Hermann Cohen said "True, there is a weighing down and constriction of the private life . . . but whoever has not had the experience of living under this yoke will never understand that it is possible to bear this yoke like a ladder to heaven."

This dictum explains, too, the approach of the woman who kindled the lights and transgressed. She recognized that there was a spectrum of *mizvot* but she was not deterred thereby. There is a demand implicit in the *mizvot* but we also retain the power of choice. She protested silently against the slogan "all or nothing at all" which is indigenous to Jewish culture in Israel.

* * *

The appearance of Zionism has always been understood as auto-emancipation. Pinsker found the right phrase for this phenomenon. Understandably, emancipation was not a little directed towards assimilation. Auto-emancipation, on the other hand, was the will towards

autonomy; but in these two great interrelated historical phenomena there occurred a vast change, indeed, a metamorphosis such as never had occurred throughout the entire Diasporan existence of the Jews. For the first time, Jewish consciousness was penetrated by the possibility of a national existence devoid of the halakhah. It is true that, during 2000 years of Exile, Jewish life expressed itself as well in aggadah, in prayer, in piety, in mysticism, but the richness of the home and synagogue life of the Jews was undoubtedly grounded in one item of faith—that everything that a Jew ought to do and might do derived from the giving of the Torah on Sinai.

There is the possibility, understandably enough, of converting the concept of revelation to the realm of the symbolic—and to that alone—as the source of Israel's wisdom and destiny; but such had not been the case for close to 2000 years. During the greater portion of Jewish history, Jews saw in the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai an actual event, at a definite time, and in a specific place.

* * *

We return now, not to our four women, but to the sociological situation in Israel. With reference to the present citizenship of the State, only a minority of immigrants come from the west. True, the Jews of Russia are emigrating in ever-increasing numbers and their desire to do so constitutes a new miracle which would validate the many miracles in our history which preceded it. And this is precisely the point—most of these immigrants were alienated from the Jewish tradition and, in some cases, this alienation was absolute.

With regard to the emigration from Western Europe and the United States, one can ask—what is the motivation for such Aliyah? We see that many of the Western European arrivals do not emigrate because Jewish consciousness is absent in the Diaspora but precisely because they wish to realize and embody that consciousness publicly in Israel. This public embodiment is widespread, including radio and television, with the aid of which one can study the laws of Passover, the weekly Torah portion and similar matters.

The number of young people in Israel who can be recognized by their distinctive mode of dress is increasing. They are not clad in the black of the ultra-Orthodox nor do they wear a fedora atop their *kippah*. The young men do not have side curls nor do the young women wear wigs. Their style is expressed by the *kippah srugah*. These knit or crocheted *kippot* say something about Israeli realities. These young people would undoubtedly feel insulted, and justifiably so, if one were to cast doubt upon their loyalty to the Torah. They study Torah and we observe them studying Torah with loyalty and enthusiasm, even when they stand guard duty on the front. If you meet one of these *kippah*-

clad young men in the street, you have the impression of meeting a man who has a scale of values and is not ethically dissolute. I do not wish to give the impression that ortho-praxy abounds only among young immigrants. Not a few of the sabras and youngsters of the Eastern communities possess a religiosity which sets before us a number of different problems which can not even be touched on in this paper.

We must understand that this conservative religiosity constitutes a massive attempt at anchorage within Judaism and an equally massive attempt to give an authentic style to Jewish existence in the land. We find here the will *not to live as the goyim do*. This strong linkage with the tradition also has an obvious and clear pragmatic purpose. When we live in a style which, in the opinion of its adherents, is rooted in the very beginning of the existence of the people, we also proclaim our right to the homeland. It is no wonder that those who demonstrate for our right to the greater Israel—which would include Nablus as well as Jericho—are, in the main, “religious” people of the type we have described above.

* * *

The pragmatism of this anchorage is at times connected with a magical mode of thinking and a longing for roots; these two are important factors in the life of the people but it is doubtful whether they are “religion” as it was understood by the Talmudic tradition. We daresay that many, if not most of these young people (and some who are not so young) who acknowledge the integrity of the *mizvot*, but who accept only with reservation a Judaism based on the *Shulhan Arukh* and the Commentators, would be hard put to it to pass the test if we asked them the following question: “What do you mean by the giving of the Torah?”

Here we confront a problem of the utmost seriousness. It is not difficult at all to place the concept of revelation in any one of the various world views. This concept is not only complex but profound. God reveals Himself in natural events as well as in the heart of man. But when we speak of “the giving of the Torah” another matter comes to the fore. The revelation on Sinai was an incursion and an invasion from the supra-temporal and supra-spacial world into our world. This incursion took place specifically on the sixth day of Sivan, some thousands of years ago, on Mt. Sinai. No transfer to symbolism will aid us here. Only if we grasp and understand the concept of the giving of the Torah as non-symbolic can this concept function as a basis for Jewish orthopraxis. Of course we do not negate or reject the maintenance and preservation of the *mizvot* and the richness and beauty of the Jewish traditional way of life; we say only that a man whose attention and relationship to the giving of the Torah is non-symbolic but real, only such a man

can stand within the closed circle of the *mizvot* and is able to assert "all or nothing at all." Symbols can ground other symbols but they cannot serve as the basis for *mizvot* in the sense of "God commanded the *mizvot* to us."

If we were to pose the question of the meaning of revelation to those who most aggressively maintain "all or nothing at all," and refuse to have anything to do with those who select only meaningful *mizvot*, they, too, would have some difficulty explaining revelation as an actual concrete event apposite to that which is written in Scripture. One surmises that their answers, too, would be somewhat muddy and halting. The matter becomes even more difficult if we consider the dictum of the rabbinic sages which, in everyone's view, represents the classical version of the tradition. We refer here to the famous aggadah in Midrash Rab-bah in the Sidrah of *Aḥarei Mot*: "Mikrah, Mishnah, Halakhot, Talmud, Tosefta, Aggadot, and even that which a full-fledged and wise student of the future will say in the presence of his master—all of these were already given to Moses at Sinai." The concept of *Torah min hashamayim* (Torah revealed from on high) is one that contains within itself not only an overwhelmingly concrete event, one which is distant from us in point of time, but, also, the non-rational chain which extends from Mt. Sinai and in which are already embedded all of the various thoughts and the complete discussion of the law even unto the various details of the combination of meat and milk and its prohibition. It seems to us that only someone who has a complete and whole-hearted relationship which is not given over to doubt about the revelation at Sinai and the chain of tradition extending from that event up to our day is authorized to call himself an observer of the commandments of the Lord. All others, although they adhere to the observance of the *mizvot* to the fullest degree possible, are, in the light of this dogmatic question that we have raised—closer to the conservatives or to the liberals than they themselves believe.

The sensitive reader is aware of our critical stance with regard to the functional use of religion. But we cannot deny the fact that it was only through its function that the historic role of the Jewish faith was maintained during the long Exile. The halakhah and the aggadah and everything else that is summarized in the Shulḥan Arukh were truly areas in which the people of Israel linked itself with its God and wherein it sought to observe His commands. But, together with all of this, the faith constituted a defense as well—a fortress and a wall against assimilation. Religion functioned, although this was not realized consciously and continually, in a dual fashion for our people—it was at once the divine law which was given to the people of Israel, but it was also a defense which safeguarded the existence of that people. Do we not

remember that very famous dictum that “more than Israel has observed the Sabbath the Sabbath has maintained Israel”?

Four years after the Balfour declaration, our teacher Julius Guttman, may his memory be for a blessing, wrote an essay in which he expressed the hopes which were tied up with the rebuilding of the land. The essence of what he said was, in our opinion, contained in the allusion that the dual function of religion which we mentioned above would now become unnecessary in the old-new land. The land—at that time they did not think about a state—and its institutions would constitute sufficient warranties for the survival of the Jewish people, and religion could become exclusively the worship of God.

In our situation today these hopes no longer obtain. The Jew in Israel hears on the radio disputes between rabbis as to whether, for example, the ink which is inscribed on eggs invalidates them for use at Passover. The viewpoint of “all or nothing,” for the person who does not wish to observe the entire range of the *mizvot* closes the gate against that most human experience, the experiment to transcend himself and his human bounds in what, for lack of better words, we call the attempt to reach a religious experience. All of this is stolen away from him the moment that he sees that the realm of the holy is a realm which is defended by fences and outposts.

We are, therefore, not overly saddened by the secularization of life in modern Israel. It is possible that within it there will be liberated, among the young people and the youthful souls, some hidden forces which will eventually change the aspect of the land and its people. We should remember only two things: religion has its origin and root in the inner soul of man, and secularization is a sociological concept that does not apply to the private self. We have faith in those powers of the private self which ascend and purport to transcend even the secular aura of the state.

Israel With and Without Religion: An Appreciation of Kaufmann's Golah ve-Nekhar

JANET KOFFLER O'DEA

I. The Determinative Role of Religion

YEHEZKEL KAUFMANN IS WELL KNOWN IN THE academic world for his classic study of Biblical religion, *Toledot ha-Emunah ha-Yisraelit*.¹ In this massive work, he describes the originality and profundity of the Mosaic religious breakthrough, and traces its development in successive periods of Israelite history. What is less well known is that Kaufmann's great concern with the nature of the religious idea and its effect upon the Jewish people was rooted in a burning existential anxiety over the situation of European Jewry in his own day. What would be the fate of the Jews who were turning away from Judaism? Could the Jewish people survive in modern times? Kaufmann had to resolve these questions before he could embark upon the detailed history of the development of the religious idea found in *Toledot*. In his early essays and then in the monumental historiosophic work, *Golah ve-Nekhar*,² Kaufmann wrestles with the most perplexing problems of past Jewish history as background to an analysis of the terrible dilemmas which confronted his fellow Jews in Europe. It is most unfortunate that *Golah ve-Nekhar* has been neglected by Jewish historians and philosophers, for it is a major contribution to twentieth century historical thought. Anyone seeking to understand the relationship of religion and nationalism in Jewish life must read it for its brilliant delineation of the role of these forces in Jewish history. Anyone seeking to understand the history of Zionism must consider the treatment of nationalist thought and Kaufmann's own nationalist position as presented in *Golah ve-Nekhar*. And, finally, anyone seeking to understand the problems of alienation and exile which exist in our own time will find in these volumes insights as applicable to the present situation of Jews in the Diaspora as they were to that of European Jewry in the 1920s.

The subtitle of this work, a "Historical-Sociological Study of Jewish History from Ancient Times to the Present," would seem to indi-

1. Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-Emunah ha-Yisraelit* (Tel Aviv, 1955), 8 volumes.

2. Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Golah ve-Nekhar* (Tel Aviv: 1928-1932), 4 volumes.

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cate a dispassionate abstract analysis. Indeed, Kaufmann did attempt to write from an objective, historical and sociological perspective, as free from preconceptions as possible. However, Kaufmann was far from being an uninvolved scholar. He was, rather, a man who labored under a tremendous sense of obligation towards his people, whose condition he regarded as perilous. He undertook his study with the conviction that a description of the processes governing Jewish history was necessary before a practical program for the future could be designed. He believed strongly that ideas could have a determinative function in shaping human destiny, and hoped that the ideas emerging from his book would change the minds of men and, thereby, affect the future of Jewish national survival.

The first two volumes of *Golah ve-Nekhar* are actually a methodological preamble to the main concern of the study, the ongoing function of religion in determining Jewish history. Kaufmann asserts that of all ideas in the realm of human culture, the most significant, historically, have been the religious ones. In a phenomenological description of the relationship between man and the ineffable, he stresses the power which the sacred has had upon man.³ From the religious experience there emerged organizations with vast sociological importance and cultural creations that expressed the greatest talents and efforts of man.

The creative force of religion was most obviously visible in the history of Israel, whose very national being had been shaped and preserved by certain religious conceptions. Kaufmann demonstrates how the interlocking of the religious and ethnic elements enabled the Jews to defy the normal processes of history in existing as a national unit outside of their homeland.⁴ Consciousness of kinship, of a common origin and shared destiny, which is necessary to any national group, was most acute in Israel because of the force of religious legitimation. The covenantal experiences between Yahweh and the Hebrews were accepted by Israel as the ground and very reason for their national being. Because Jews defined themselves as a national-religious community, their historic fate was not dependent upon the normal foundations of national existence—land and language. Wherever they lived, Jews carried with them the religious conceptions which gave purpose to their existence: the religious laws and customs which separated them in areas of intimate primary contact from their neighbors, and the religious calendar which distinguished their individual and communal life cycles from those of the non-Jewish world.

The conception that God had sentenced his chosen people to suffer exile, *galut*, until the moment of redemption, determined Jewish

3. Ibid., I, Chapter 2.

4. Ibid.

withdrawal from the non-Jewish world. Jews understood themselves to be a people without a homeland, caught in eternal exile and alienation. While stressing the power of the religious concept of exile and redemption in determining that Jews remain separate, Kaufmann constantly indicates the degree to which there was interaction with the non-Jewish world. Acculturation in dress, language, styles, and ways of thought were natural processes. Kaufmann points to the constant tension which existed between assimilation and withdrawal into the ghetto. As long as the traditional religious ideas were accepted, the process of assimilation could never reach its end-station—full social and cultural integration.

II. *Secularization and Assimilation: The Negative Function of Religion*

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, changes in the intellectual, economic, political, and social life of Europe influenced Jews in the ghetto and eventually led to a radical rupture in the delicate assimilation/self-segregation balance. Many Jews broke out of the all-encompassing framework of Judaism in an effort to assimilate into the "secular" society of Europe. In his analysis of modern assimilation, Kaufmann stresses the revolutionary edge of the phenomenon. For the first time in exilic history, Jews had determined to end the exile itself through their own efforts. Believing that they could acquire a homeland in Europe, following full cultural and social assimilation, they abandoned the ghetto and Torah. Many historians have shown how the effort to end exile failed, both because European society was not neutral and because the European folk was not prepared to accept the Jew as a cultural and social equal. The particular brilliance of Kaufmann's account of the failure of assimilation lies in his description of the role of religion in determining this process, even in a time of secularization and even among the non-religious.

Kaufmann claims that, in a negative sense, religion undermined assimilation and, thereby, controlled the destiny of the non-religious Jew. Because Europe was basically Christian, despite the ideology of the Enlightenment, one had to become a Christian in order really to participate fully in its culture and society. As long as one who was born Jewish did not undergo conversion, he would remain in a state of alienation and exile. Many Jews, sensing this condition and desiring to fulfill the aspiration for assimilation, did convert. However, the masses did not, and, according to Kaufmann, never would convert. This is a crucial point in Kaufmann's presentation: conversion *en masse* occurs only when men experience a new revelation of truth. Jews who abandoned their religious heritage would take the radical step of conversion to Christianity only if they were convinced of the truth of the new faith. However, as long as most Jews considered Christianity a false faith, they would not

betray their own authenticity through a false conversion, even for the sake of social, economic, or political convenience. According to Kaufmann, it is in this negative sense, in the sense that they would not become Christians, that the masses of modern non-believing Jews found themselves in the same state of estrangement and exile which had characterized the existence of their believing forefathers.⁵

Kaufmann goes one step further in identifying religion as the final cause of the failure of assimilation. Judaism, he says, had long ago created a community which was considered alien by the Christian world. As long as that national-religious community survived, albeit in diminished numbers, all Jews who did not divorce themselves from it through conversion, would be marked by the stigma of alienation which it bore. The attempts of the non-religious Jew to disassociate himself from both ethnic and religious Judaism, or of the Reformed Jew to disassociate himself from the national aspects of Judaism, would end in failure. All Jews would live forever under the shadow of the ancient identification of ethnicity with religion as long as Judaism survived. And this would be true as far into the future as one could predict, because, in the opinion of Kaufmann, man is a religious being who would express his relationship to the sacred through established institutions throughout his history.⁶ Judaism would persist as a spiritual force and structure of life, and all Jews would be branded by it. In Kaufmann's view, therefore, both in the positive sense, as a source of meaning and structure, and in the negative sense, as a mark of identification foiling the aspiration for assimilation, Judaism would be the determining factor in the life of the Jewish people in the future as it had been in the past. For those in whose lives Judaism had only a negative function, the terrible tragedy was that they bore a fate whose long, self-evident meaning had been lost for them.

III. *Nationalism and its Reinterpretation of "Judaism"*

The lucid analysis of the positive and negative effects of religion upon the modern Jew led Kaufmann to the conclusion that assimilation had failed to solve the Jewish problem in Europe and that exile and alienation were permanent conditions. The effort to assimilate had resulted in the internal weakening of Jewish life without the achievement of the natural right to a homeland in Europe. Recognition of these facts was a precondition to the acceptance of the notion that a practical nationalist solution to exile was absolutely necessary, and Kaufmann's entire presentation was intended to bring the reader to that point.

5. Kaufmann believed that the Jews would never convert *en masse*, and discussed the entire matter in *Golah ve-Nekhar*, I, pp. 437-455.

6. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 283-299; 348-424.

The Jewish nationalist movement had begun with the realistic matter of acquiring and settling a homeland, but had moved to the cultural issue of reviving Judaism in order to fortify Jewish existence in exile as well as in the homeland. Kaufmann is highly critical of this development. He dedicates the final section of *Golah ve-Nekhar* to a thorough examination of modern nationalist thought, believing that the fate of the Jewish people would depend upon the direction which the nationalist leadership defined. Kaufmann's critique points to the theoretical weaknesses in the work of the major nationalist thinkers, and is based upon his understanding of the unique nature of Judaism and its role in Jewish history.⁷

Kaufmann links Moses Hess, Peretz Smolenskin, Simon Dubnow, Ahad Ha-am, Berdichevsky, and even Brenner by tracing the single thread of motivation through all of their writings. He claims that each was driven by the need to find a substitute for religion, a substitute that would bolster a disintegrating national culture and revive Jewish life in the Diaspora. These thinkers set as their task the definition of a spiritual value or idea which would reinspire the Jewish heart and regenerate national loyalty. While pointing to the objective fact that Jews were an ancient ethnic unit with the same national right to exist, like any other national minority, the major stress of this trend in nationalist thought was the spiritual element.

After discussing the various conceptions which were considered by this school to be the constitutive foundation and justification for Jewish national being, and which he calls spiritual nationalism, Kaufmann levels a hard-hitting critique at the entire program. He strikes directly at the heart of the matter—there can be no redefinition of Judaism that would replace the traditional content and still be to the Jewish people what religion had been in the past. By focussing upon cultural revival in the hope of sustaining exilic Jewry, the spiritual nationalists were victims of a basic confusion between religion and nationalism which led them to misinterpret past Jewish history, to misunderstand present Jewish needs, and to misprognosticate the Jewish future. National sentiment had not been the determinative force in preserving Jewish unity in the past, and it was not the lack of national will which was the crucial problem of the present. The spiritualist nationalists had identified transcendent religious conceptions with national values and the authentic Jew with the patriot, says Kaufmann. They had described the essence of Judaism as being national will, ethics, or cultural value, with religion secondary to the national core. However, in Kaufmann's view, religion and nationalism are neither identical nor interchangeable in Judaism. The entire treatment of the interplay of religion and nationalism

7. Ibid.

in *Golah ve-Nekhar* demonstrates that nationalism in itself had never been an ultimate value, and certainly not the value which motivated the tenacious effort of the Jews to survive in exile. Only those national values which had been legitimated by the sanction of the sacred had withstood the natural trends towards assimilation. Outside of the area covered by religion, Jewish national values, customs, and ideas lost their distinctiveness as they came under the influence of the local environment. Religion had not been secondary to national ethics or any other ideals. On the contrary, religious ideas, including ethical precepts, but extending beyond them to a total world view based upon a relationship to the transcendent, had been the genuine motivation underlying the great attempt of the Jewish people to maintain themselves as a national-religious unity.

Modern sociological jargon supplies a phrase which expresses clearly the problems which Kaufmann perceives in the work of the spiritual nationalists. The issue was whether there could be a "functional equivalent" for religion. According to Kaufmann, the nationalists had attempted to make out of Jewish nationalism a force which would fulfill the same functions that religion had fulfilled in the past. They had expected that their definitions of the content of Judaism would merit the same devotion that the Torah had evoked and that the nationalist Jew had been obligated to the word of the Lord. Spiritual nationalism invested the national spirit or national sentiment with sacred powers and claimed that nationalism alone would provide the means and the meaning for Jewish survival in the Diaspora. Kaufmann argues, in opposition, that no aesthetic, ethical, or philosophic ideal could be a surrogate for religion because none possesses the ultimacy and sacrality of the religious dimension. None could grasp men and motivate them to act in the way that the imperatives of Judaism had done. There would be no mini-conversion to an ethical redefinition and no spirit of total devotion to a humanist equivalent of Judaism.⁸

Not as a theologian denouncing nationalism as idolatry, but simply as an historian, Kaufmann denies that any idea could function as a substitute for Judaism in maintaining the Jewish people in exile. He suggests that the writings of the spiritual nationalists were works of abstract thinkers who had lost contact with the real needs and feelings of the Jewish people. They were intellectuals seeking a redefinition and constructing a system which would provide a base in exile, when what was required was an escape from that very condition. The writings of these men furnished Kaufmann with yet another example of the force of the religious idea in Jewish life. Those who claimed to be liberated from the official religious camp were all marked by the heritage of Juda-

8. Ibid, II, Chapter 10.

ism. None could legitimate a Jewish national entity devoid of spiritual significance. Judaism still possessed them so that they had to seek an idea or set of values to be the center of national existence, to provide meaning, worth, and structure to an exiled people.

The fact that religious and ethnic elements had been intertwined in Judaism might have made it easier for those who denied the transcendent foundations of Jewish peoplehood to continue consecrating the nation qua nation. Spiritual nationalists were devoted to the nation, believed in its mission, and sought to define for it a new Torah. They viewed Judaism functionally as a means to an end. Sociological functionalists had described religion as a system of myths and rituals developed by a society to guard its ideal vision and value by linking them to a divine source. This functionalist attitude was characteristic of the Jewish nationalists who considered Judaism to have been a framework of ideas and practices, useful in safeguarding national unity in a less advanced age, but now antiquated and disposable. For them, the plausibility of traditional religious ideas had collapsed and ethnicity had become the total content of their own identity. From their nationalist non-religious perspective they proceeded to reinterpret past Jewish history, viewing all religious phenomena as forms framing a nationalistic essence.

IV. Kaufmann's Resolution of the Crisis Facing Diaspora Jewry

Kaufmann claims that Judaism is not identical with nationalism, and does not reinterpret the former in order to revive the latter. He feels that Jews who lacked commitment to the ideas and forms which derive from a genuine religious experience, could not be lured back to Judaism or to the Jewish people by a surrogate for religion, devised for that purpose by a nationalist intellectual. The ever-increasing number of assimilating Jews, who would not be able to achieve the unity with European society which they desired, would still not participate in the revival of Jewish national culture in exile. These people wanted freedom from communal social and cultural pressure in order to pursue secular opportunities in European society, and no ideological system could exercise the ultimate force over them to return them to the Jewish community.

Because Kaufmann had concluded that no vital and creative non-religious Jewish community could ever survive in exile, he proposes one single realistic and practical option for the Jewish people. Acquisition of a territory, emigration to it, and the creation of a natural humanist culture in this homeland—a program that was far less utopian than any attempt to rebuild a community in exile. He urges the spiritual nationalists to renounce the cultural issue and concentrate on the problem that

is relevant to all Jews—their physical redemption from the inevitable disappointments of assimilation and the inherent miseries of exile.⁹

Kaufmann laments the naiveté and idealism of the spiritual nationalists who had faith in the power of their ideas to replace religion as a force to maintain Jewish life in exile. Yet, in his own anticipation that men would be moved to act as a result of conclusions drawn from a theoretical study, Kaufmann is himself highly idealistic. He had struggled to understand the nature of exile, of nationalism, and of Jewish history while being driven by the urgency of having to charge to action a seemingly unmoved and fatigued Jewish people. He expected that his diagnosis regarding the impossibility of continued ethnic existence in exile would be understood and that the obvious practical steps would be taken by the many people who shared his ideas. Although Kaufmann denies that any idea except religion could muster the force necessary to survive as a unity in exile, he did expect that the idea of practical redemption would accomplish the tremendous task of rousing Eastern European Jewry to emigrate to a Jewish homeland. In this hope, Kaufmann appears to be an abstract thinker rather removed from the true feelings of the people. He possessed an abiding faith in the power of ideas, evident throughout *Golah ve-Nekhar*. Naively, he projects this faith upon all Jews, feeling that they, too, would recognize an intellectual truth and then translate it into action. In his own self-understanding an extremely realistic practical thinker, Kaufmann, too, was an idealist whose actual influence was minor.

It cannot be said that in any practical sense *Golah ve-Nekhar* was a milestone in the history of Jewish nationalism. Yet, the work is of extreme importance to those concerned with understanding the special nature and history of the Jewish people. And there are aspects of Kaufmann's presentation, particularly his diagnosis of modern Jewry without traditional religion, which offer insights that are helpful in an analysis of contemporary Diaspora Jewry. In certain ways Kaufmann's challenges to his contemporaries confront and challenge the apparent harmonious adjustment of Judaism and Jewry to America.

V. *Jewry With and Without Religion in America Today*

At first glance it would seem that the most essential concepts in Kaufmann's presentation, exile and alienation, cannot be transferred to the American scene. The very meaning of these terms, so basic to the sensibility and thought of the European Jew, has been lost to the American. The majority of contemporary American Jews have not experienced disappointment in assimilation, are not miserable in exile, and

9. *Ibid*, II, pp. 471ff.

feel quite at-home where they live. The freedom, security, and opportunity which they enjoy have diminished the traditional Jewish sense of alienation to the point where only a handful of American Jews have been motivated to emigrate to the State of Israel, which beckons them constantly.

However, despite the manifest satisfaction, there are signs which lead one to suspect that Kaufmann's categories may not be totally inappropriate to the situation in the United States. While the separation of Church and State is a firmly established legal principle, American society is still based upon Christian ideals, eschatology, and symbolism. Jews do not share in this underlying level of social and cultural life. The recent custom of referring to the Christian core as Judeo-Christian represents an acknowledgement of religion's role in the public sphere, and an attempt to obliterate the divisive, particularistic elements of the Jewish tradition. However, this device cannot negate what has been true since the first century—Jews and Christians are in conflict over fundamental points of religious truth and express their specific religious experiences in fundamentally different ways. It may be true that these conflicts have been deemphasized in America, but their potential is recognized by the Jew, consciously or unconsciously, and is a subtle cause of alienation. For the religious man, the fact that Judaism places him in a minority status with certain disadvantages, makes sense. For the non-religious one it is a matter of fate which he must accept without the conviction that it is justified in any divine historical scheme.

The traditional Christian character of America represents one force which creates a degree of disharmony between Jews and the general American society, and validates Kaufmann's claim that, even in the modern context, religion remains determinative in establishing a distinctive Jewish identity. There is a structural factor which heightens the role of religion in the life of the Jew in the United States and further substantiates Kaufmann's thesis that Judaism is strategic in maintaining a united community in the Diaspora. Sociologists have indicated that the affirmation of religion as a positive American value has prompted Jews to define themselves religiously and to carry on communal activities of all kinds within a religious framework. Accommodating to the American pattern of assimilation which, until this decade, encouraged the dissolution of foreign ethnic loyalties, Jews underplayed their ethnic character and defined themselves as a religious group divided into movements along the lines of the accepted Protestant model of denomination. For this reason, more and more Jews have affiliated themselves with religious institutions (70% is the current estimate). These institutions offer recreational, social, and cultural activities of an ethnic nature. They also are the main source for what commitment there is to intensifying Jewish

education, to deepening the interior life of the American Jew, and to regenerating all aspects of Jewish culture.

Thus, it is quite clear that religion is a primary source of structure and a mark of identity for the majority of America's Jews. For some, the identity is positive—a manifestation of an inner experience or conviction. For others, it is negative or neutral, at best—imposed by birth and by the Christian world. Thus, Kaufmann's claim that Judaism would continue to be a determinative force, in both a positive and negative sense, in the life of any Diaspora community is obviously relevant to the situation of the Jews in America. However, having said that, one must ask whether the main object of concern and the unifying force in American Jewish life today, the State of Israel, fulfills the functions which religion fulfilled in the life of traditional Jewry. Does the role which Israel plays for Jewry in the United States contradict Kaufmann's thesis that there can be no surrogate for Judaism in maintaining unity in the Diaspora?

It is not possible to give a definitive answer to this question, but one may hazard some comments which demand further thinking and observation. Certainly in the last decade there has been a tremendous intensification of Jewish group consciousness and pride. The successes and crises of Israel have been the single most important source of this group feeling among America's Jews. Israel, as an ideal and reality, has become the strategic unifying and activating symbol in American Jewish life. Whereas no book, personality, or school is recognized as authoritative by the entire Jewish community, the needs of the State and the call of its leaders possess compelling power. For the sake of Israel American Jews have learned to mobilize their resources, exercise their political clout, and solidify themselves in a way that has been impossible for any other cause. The actual results achieved in this effort have been enormous, and have produced an increased self-confidence and respect among the Jews of the United States.

That Israel has manifold and vital functions in American Jewish life does not mean that it is a functional equivalent for religion. First, many Jews support the State as an extension of religious activity rather than as a replacement for it. At a time when people are yearning for the bonds of community, emphasis upon the communal aspects of Judaism and the reappropriation of national themes into religious life have reinvigorated synagogue programs throughout America. There are those with no official association with Judaism whose activity on behalf of Israel is their only expression of Jewish identity. When a crisis threatening the State arises, these people suddenly emerge to aid their fellow Jews, only to retire to the periphery of all Jewish affairs when the crisis has passed. The one call which can arouse the secular and assimilating

Jew is the cry for physical redemption, which, as Kaufmann had stated, was the single issue relevant to all Jews in Europe. Support for Israel on the part of peripheral Jews and even of those religiously affiliated, is a vicarious act, partial and external. It is support for the **redemption** of others, involving only a segment of one's own effort and time, and relating to the physical aspect of Jewish existence alone.

A surrogate for religion is an ultimate force which exercises supreme power over man and is manifested in all aspects of his existence. Unless the fascination with Israel is transformed into a deep commitment to education and culture, it will be no more than a **superficial means of** expressing self-identity for the secular or religious American Jew. In his polemic against the spiritual nationalists, Kaufmann argues that no secular ideal has the potential to replace Judaism in preserving the unity of the exiled Jew. The cause of Israel, detached from religious commitment, may evoke great periodic concern, but it has not developed into the foundation of an active, creative Jewish community in the United States. It is doubtful whether cultural nationalism can ever stem the natural processes of assimilation and become the functional equivalent of Judaism for more than isolated individuals.

The great American Jewish thinker, Mordecai M. Kaplan, recognized that secular, ethnic culture could not be the basis of American Jewish life. At the same time, he knew that ethnicity was the force which motivated loyalty to the Jewish community on the part of a growing number of non-religious Jews. Kaplan's aim was to reinterpret religion for those influenced by modern thought so that it could become a plausible *raison d'être* for what existed as a matter of fact—a highly rationalized but self-conscious ethnic community. In this very effort Kaplan testified to Yehezkel Kaufmann's thesis that the religious idea was a necessary ground if a Jewish community were to survive in exile. Reconstructionism, the movement based upon Kaplan's thought, represents a sanctification of the values which enhance and preserve the Jewish people. Its synagogue program includes all activities which intensify the inter-relationships among Jews. Kaplan's thought served as the theoretical grounding and Reconstructionism is the practical framework for the expression of the urgent need felt by American Jews to insure Jewish survival.

Kaplan had been highly influenced by the writings of Ahad Ha-am and Dubnow. He, too, sought an idea which would provide meaning and purpose for Jewish existence in exile and which would reinvigorate Jewish national-religious culture. It is not our aim to evaluate the religious conceptions of Kaplan as elaborated in his many works, but merely to point to the parallel in motivation and method between him and the spiritual nationalists. Both aspired to regenerate the Jewish

people and both utilized Judaism as an instrument to that end. There is a fundamental difference between them in that Kaplan is an observant and believing Jew, whereas the spiritual nationalists disavowed traditional religious ideas and practices. However, the instrumental attitude towards religion was shared by them, as was the elevation of ethnicity to a primary position in Jewish identity.

Considering the nature of the religious experience, Kaplan and the spiritual nationalists are subject to the same basic criticism. The religious experience is a *sui generis* phenomenon. It derives from a confrontation with the sacred which is felt to be ultimate, transcendent, and ineffable. No surrogate can be found for this experience nor for the specific ideas, rituals, and organizations which derive from it. Religious ideas cannot be manipulated in order to fulfill social functions. It may be true that religious ideas have contributed to preserving social order and have functioned in conserving a social status quo. However, it was not for the sake of this value that religious structures were established. Religious institutions emerge out of a genuine response to an experience of the sacred and are established to preserve that experience. The imperative force of the experience cannot be conjured up in order to be utilized for man's social needs. Both the spiritual nationalists and Mordecai M. Kaplan approached matters of the spirit functionally, manipulating ideas for national interests. As Kaufmann insists, none of the ideas which the nationalists substituted for religion was a genuine ultimate to which men subjugated themselves. Therefore, none could replace Judaism as the foundation of the nation in exile. Kaplan's notion of Judaism as a civilization, including religion but relying upon the value of communal identity and the attraction of an ethnic culture to engage American Jews, may be no more successful in regenerating and sustaining the American Jewish community.

The great strength of Yehezkel Kaufmann's analysis in *Golah ve-Nekhar* is his appreciation of the role of religion in serving as a source of meaning and order throughout Jewish history. Jews willingly withstood the natural forces of assimilation because of religious ideas which dictated life in exile. When these ideas no longer made sense and Jews desired to end the exile, they found themselves strangers and alienated, again because of the force of the religious idea. And, then, discovering that, willy-nilly, they remained an ethnic unit, Jews sought to give significance to their existence, in the shadow of the religious idea which they had rejected. With great pathos Kaufmann describes all of these developments, giving salience always to the role of spiritual forces in influencing and forming the course of events. Moreover, despite the vast differences between European and American Jewry, the categories of analysis and the diagnosis and the prognosis presented in *Golah ve-Nek-*

har yield ideas which are of great value in examining the Jewish community in America as it exists, with and without religion.

Golah ve-Nekhar was written with the intention of confronting Jewry with certain conclusions drawn from historical research and with a program for immediate decisive action in line with these conclusions. Obviously, the book did not have the impact which its author intended for it. Even within the Zionist camp it did not arouse a reconsideration of basic positions. Certainly among Jews outside of Zionist circles the book did not affect any theoretical or practical change, and in this sense failed to realize the goal stated in its introduction. Nonetheless, *Golah ve-Nekhar* deserves study as a monumental contribution to an understanding of the dialectic of religion and nationalism that was crucial in past Jewish history, and as a testament to the desperate problems of Jewish life in the first half of the twentieth century.



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The Destruction and Resurrection of the Jews in the Fiction of I. B. Singer

EDWARD ALEXANDER

THE BEST-KNOWN UTTERANCE ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST in the writings of Isaac Bashevis Singer is the concluding statement of the English version of *The Family Moskat*: "Death is the Messiah. That's the real truth." The setting is Warsaw at the time of the Nazi bombardment and invasion in 1939; the speaker is Hertz Yanovar (a Jew who has substituted psychic research for religion). The statement gains its tremendous force less from the events within the novel than from the reader's knowledge of what will befall the Jews after the novel ends, not only in Poland, but everywhere in Europe. But it is also intended to pass adverse judgment upon the Jewish impatience for redemption, an impatience which expresses itself still, to some extent, in the religious longing of the traditional Jew, but, primarily, in the developmental superstitions of the modern secular Jew. The novel shows how the Russian Revolution of 1905, which had accelerated the break-up of the Jewish world, had, paradoxically, quickened the messianic expectations both of the *hasidim* who deplored this disintegration and of the *maskilim* (enlighteners) and leftists who welcomed it.

The Family Moskat is a study of the prospective victims of the Holocaust and of the reasons for their victimization. That Singer should, both in this novel and elsewhere, assume that the Holocaust is to be understood, insofar as it *can* be understood, primarily as an event in Jewish history, represents both an advantage and a shortcoming of his method. Singer never accepts the implications of the old joke told by liberals about the anti-Semite who claims that the Jews had caused the first World War and gets the reply, "Yes, the Jews and the bicyclists." "Why the bicyclists?" asks the anti-Semite. "Why the Jews?" asks the other. On the contrary, Singer sees the major catastrophes of Jewish history in the diaspora as so many announcements of the Holocaust, of which they are the prototypes. Nowhere in his fiction does Singer assume that the Jews were accidental victims of the Holocaust, or that the disaster might just as well have befallen another people. When Reb Dan Katzenellenbogen ponders the relationship between the pacific ethos of the Jews and the orgiastic violence of the gentiles, and asks of the latter: "What were they

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seeking? What would be the outcome of their endless wars?" we know what the answer is: the destruction of the Jews. A Europe for which the prospect of murdering Jews had become, in the nineteenth century, the primary principle of social unity, cannot be said to have stumbled accidentally upon the Jews as victims. But if Singer avoids the pitfalls of the approach which assumes the perfect innocence of the Jews and the accidental nature of their victimization, he may be said to go to the other extreme in that he tends to view the Nazis as only the latest in the long succession of those murderous outsiders who have obtruded themselves upon Jewish history again and again. "Yes," sighs the narrator of *The Family Moskat*, "every generation had its Pharaohs and Hamans and Chmielnickis. Now it was Hitler."

In *The Slave*, a novel ostensibly dealing with the plight of Jews in seventeenth-century Poland in the aftermath of the fearful massacres perpetrated by the Polish peasant-revolutionary, Chmielnicki, Singer is clearly writing about the Holocaust. Virtually all the questions that his explicit Holocaust literature characteristically asks are posed in this novel. "Why did this happen to us?" one of the men asks. "Josefov was a home of Torah." "It was God's will," a second answers. "But why? What sins did the small children commit? They were buried alive." How, asks the novel's hero, how can the mind grasp such a quantity of horrors? "There was a limit to what the human mind could accept. It was beyond the power of any man to contemplate all these atrocities and mourn them adequately." What was the role of God in all this? Could so much evil really be explained as a test of man's faith, of his free will? "Did the Creator require the assistance of Cossacks to reveal His nature?" Could Chmielnicki really be a part of the godhead or was it perhaps true that this massacre of the Jews revealed the existence of a radical evil in the universe, a devil who had no celestial origins? *The Slave* also shows us Jews who are forced to dig their own graves before they are executed. It berates the Jewish community for its shameful failure to offer forceful resistance to the murders, and preaches the sacred duty of remembering forever those who were slaughtered. "Through forgetfulness," Jacob says of himself, "he had also been guilty of murder." In its dwelling upon the physical obscenities of the mass murders, *The Slave* may even be said to deal more concretely with the Holocaust than those novels and stories which approach it frontally.

Our reaction to Singer's tendency to generalize the Holocaust in this way will depend in part on whether we view anti-Semitism as a phenomenon deeply embedded in western culture or as a movement quite distinct from religious Jews-hatred, a movement which grew up only in the nineteenth century. Since a novelist is obliged to write about what he knows, which in Singer's case is the Jews and the Christians of Poland, we can hardly expect him to give us a portrayal of the German

murderers of Polish Jewry. Yet we might reasonably expect that a writer who, in treating the Holocaust, recognizes the centrality of the question "Why the Jews?" should at least not preclude us from asking the question, although he cannot ask it himself, "Why the Germans?" That Singer should implicitly short-circuit this question is the more disturbing in view of the fact that he cannot finally convince us or himself that the Holocaust is no different in kind from the long series of disasters that have befallen the Jews since the seventeenth century. *The Slave* celebrates survival and recovery; the characters of *Enemies*, who have survived the camps, never recover and cannot return to life.

Singer is not only not discriminating in his treatment of the murderers of the Jews; he at times comes close to viewing them as merely a function of the Jews' failure to be true to themselves and to their best traditions. The difficult and painful question of the Jews' co-responsibility for the disaster which was to engulf them is raised often in *The Family Moskat*, both by Jews and gentiles. At a political discussion early in the book, one of those overheated conspiratorial gatherings of Jews which Singer loves to recall, a man named Lapidus upbraids his leftist friends with this classic utterance: "We dance at everybody's wedding but our own." Leftist Jews, ready and eager to spill their ink and their blood lavishly for the liberation of every other oppressed group, have called into question the very existence of the Jews as a people. The Bialodrevna rabbi, for his part, charges that the enlightened Jews are "lead-[ing] their own children to the slaughterhouse," a remark which gains in impact from the later description, filled with Singer's vegetarian zeal, of the actual slaughterhouse which Asa Heshel and Hadassah visit. A Polish inspector adds his sinister voice to this chorus of accusers when he tells Hertz Yanovar, who has been arrested (mistakenly) on charges of Communist activity, that the massive Jewish involvement in Bolshevism exacerbates anti-Semitism and "puts the very existence of the Jewish race in danger."

If we suspect Singer of stacking the evidence against his left-leaning Jewish characters, we should remember that his accusation of self-destructive zealotry can be amply confirmed by external sources. Chaim Weizmann said that hundreds of thousands of young Jews in early twentieth-century Russia were convinced revolutionaries "offering themselves for sacrifice as though seized by a fever." Peretz wrote of the 1905 Revolution, which roused the hopes of so many leftist Jews, that the pogrom which accompanied it demonstrated a painful truth:

In the hands of the Jew, the reddest of all flags has been placed forcibly and he has been told: "Go, go on and on, with all liberators, with all fighters for a better tomorrow, with all destroyers of Sodom. But never may you rest with them. The earth will burn under your feet. Pay everywhere the bloodiest costs of the process of liberation, but be unnamed

in all emancipation proclamations, . . . You are the weakest and the least of the nations and you will be the last for redemption."

Although it has been frequently and correctly observed, sometimes by Singer himself, that his literary roots lie outside of the Yiddish tradition, although within the Jewish tradition, there is one important respect in which he is a continuator of Abramovitch, Sholom Aleichem, and Peretz. Like them, he looks upon the Jews, with a rare exception here and there (usually, in Singer, a Zionist exception), as political imbeciles, incapable of recognizing not just political actualities, but the most fundamental political and human necessity—that of self-preservation. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the verdict of his fiction should go clearly against those Jews who undermined, first their right to exist as a people and then, inevitably, their right to exist at all by embracing the Socialist distinction between the Jews as a people—a particularly reactionary and obscurantist people—and those individual Jews who enlisted in the party of humanity. The running argument in Singer's novels of modern life over whether the hatred of Jews is increased by those Jews who retain their Yiddish and their caftan and their sidelocks or by those who assimilate themselves to the host culture by speaking Polish and shortening their jackets and their hair and their memory, was settled by history itself, for the plan to eliminate Jews from the face of the earth originated in a country where Jews aped the manners and the culture and, often, the religion of their prospective murderers. (To be sure, the German grandchildren, or at least great-grandchildren, of those Jews who had repudiated their faith would not have been among the murdered of Auschwitz; but they might have been among the murderers. "If we don't want to become like the Nazis," says Herman Broder in *Enemies*, "we must be Jews.")

But this application of the wisdom of hindsight (which, we should add, is better than the stupidity of hindsight) is not the core of Singer's analysis of the Jews' co-responsibility for the terrible fate which befell them. The hero of *Enemies*, looking back upon the destruction of his people, believes that the Holocaust will have had one (and only one) salutary effect if it has discredited the delusion of progress: "Phrases like a 'better world' and a 'brighter tomorrow' seemed to him a blasphemy on the ashes of the tormented." It was precisely the belief in progress, whether defined by Darwin or by Marx, that implicated Jewish *maskilim* and Jewish socialists in the deluge which eventually overwhelmed them and their brethren. First, it was this belief that sanctioned the elimination of biologically inferior species and socially backward classes; secondly, it intensified secular messianism and so prepared the arrival of the latest in the long line of false messiahs who have been a curse upon the history of the Jews.

In her brilliant essay on *The Manor*, Mary Ellmann has shown how

pervasive is the influence of Darwinian evolutionism on that novel's "emancipated" characters. But, for her, Singer's critique of Darwinism dwells upon its tendency to blur distinctions between man and animal, Jew and gentile, piety and impiety. My own view is that the main thrust of Singer's attack is directed against the evolutionist belief in perpetual and progressive motion because, as historians have often argued, it is analogous to the Marxist belief in history's infallibility:

The conversation turned to religion. Zipkin said straight out that he was an atheist. . . . Man, as Darwin had proved, was descended from the apes. He was just another animal: *homo sapiens*. Zipkin began discussing the doctrines of Marx, Lassalle, and Lavrov. The Polish Jew, he said, had once had a real place in society. Before the liberation of the serfs, he had acted as an intermediary between the landowners and the peasantry. He had outlived his role and become little more than a parasite. He wasn't productive, didn't speak the language of the country in which he lived, and sent his children to cheders. How long was the Jew going to wash himself in ritual baths and walk around in tzizis?

Darwin's Nature and Marx's History, hypostatized, speak with one voice on the Jewish people: *they* are the chief impediment to the removal of inferior races and backward classes which biology and history demand. When Ezriel Babad asks Zipkin whether all the Jews, including their own parents, must be destroyed because they are not peasants, his sister screams: "Leave our parents and the Jews out of it. . . . A parasite is a parasite, even if he's your father."

In *The Estate*, which continues the story of *The Manor*, the most articulate exponent of the view that both history and nature use mankind merely as raw material for the fulfillment of their high purposes is Zadok, the wayward son of the ḥasid Jochanan. Zadok believes the moral laws of the Jews are confuted by the laws of biology which sanction, and indeed require, the Malthusian struggle for existence and catastrophic wars. "It's the same to nature who kills whom. For thousands of years bulls have been slaughtered and nature has kept quiet. . . . Why should a human life be so dear to nature?"

Zadok's reference to the slaughter of bulls as a model for the slaughter of men serves to remind us that Singer's vegetarianism, which he has called his only dogma, however embarrassing it may be to some of his admirers, is crucial to his understanding of the Holocaust. For Herman Broder, "what the Nazis had done to the Jews, man was doing to animals." Singer believes that acceptance in any form whatever of the theory that might makes right must eventually victimize the Jews. Hence, in the dreams of Yoineh Meir, the slaughterer who, in the story of that name, forsakes his calling because he comes to believe that injustice to dumb beasts retards messianic redemption, "Cows assumed human shape, with beards and side locks, and skullcaps over their horns." Singer's saints, like Jochanan, whose son will welcome the killing of bulls and

of men, are not only troubled by the slaughter of animals but express tenderness over flies and bugs, as if they could feel that it was to be but a short step from the metaphorical depiction of Jews as parasites to their literal extermination as bugs.

But Darwinist-Marxist historicism is for Singer something more than just a modern expression of the doctrine that might makes right. It inspires in him a special revulsion because it joins to this doctrine the principle that morality is a consideration, not of the present, but only of the historical process, and that the evil of the moment may be justified as working the good of the developmental process. This principle, too, is a modern version of what is for Singer an ancient evil, which has spectacularly manifested itself in Jewish history in the form of apocalyptic messianism. *Satan in Goray* is Singer's most elaborate portrait of the type of the false Messiah, or, rather, of the atmosphere from which he is engendered. In this novel and, also, in the story of "The Destruction of Kreshev," Singer shows that in the messianic frenzy that existed during the lifetime of Sabbatai Zevi in the seventeenth century and even long after his apostasy and death, many Jews, convinced of the Talmudic precept that the Messiah will come when one generation is either wholly innocent or wholly guilty, plausibly decided that the way to hasten redemption and the coming of the Messiah was to plunge deeper and deeper into evil and degradation. This seemed a shorter, less winding path than that of plodding virtue. In "The Destruction of Kreshev," Shloimele, a secret follower of the false Messiah, goes so far as to say: "I love fire! I love a holocaust . . . I would like the whole world to burn and Asmodeus to take over the rule." The moral of all such stories of impatient attempts to hasten the coming of the Messiah is enunciated by the old-fashioned narrator of *Satan in Goray* at the end of that book: "LET NONE ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE LORD: TO END OUR PAIN WITHIN THE WORLD: THE MESSIAH WILL COME IN GOD'S OWN TIME. . . ."

When Singer moves to a modern setting, apocalyptic messianism becomes historicist activism which expresses itself through the by now familiar motto: "Worse is better." Precisely by exacerbating the evils, anomalies, and hatreds within the existing social system, one is preparing the liberation from some mysterious region of that impulse which will remove anomaly, injustice, and hatred altogether. Ironically, however, it is now the religious characters or those who retain nostalgic sympathy for the Jewish religion who become the exponents of patience and the critics of messianic urgency. In the nineteenth century, the Jews who altogether repudiate their religious faith adopt a secular faith, whereas it is Ezriel Babad, vacillating between the enlightenment of western Europe and the obscurantism of hasidism, who passes judgment on his sister's belief in redemption through violent revolution:

She wanted to free the peasants and the proletariat. Like their father [the rabbi], she campaigned against the company of Satan. But what would come after victory? Not redemption, not saints who benefited from the splendor of the Divine glory, but lots of newspapers, magazines, theaters, cabarets. More railroads, more machines. . . .

Ezriel's own daughter, Zina, becomes a kind of schlemiel-revolutionary who masquerades as a pregnant woman and experiences the birth pangs, not of the Messiah, but of a revolutionary arms smuggler whose cartridges burst from under her dress in a trolley car. Appalled by the results of all of these secular attempts to realize the millennium, Ezriel resolves that even his own pacific ideal of cultural pluralism "could not be brought about forcibly, nor could the Messiah be compelled to arrive."

What Ezriel opposes to the future-oriented visions of the Darwinists and Marxists who wish to accelerate the movement of natural and social history is the wisdom of standing still or even moving in reverse that is embodied by the *hasidim*.

When one gazes at the Talmudic scholars, one actually sees eternity. . . . How wonderfully they have isolated themselves amidst all this madness! They do not even know that they are at the end of the "Magnificent" and bloody nineteenth century. In their Houses of Worship, it is always the beginning.

For Ezriel, the stationariness of the *hasidim*, their entire indifference to the messianic hopes of the Darwinians and revolutionists, their contempt for the alleged decrees of Nature and History which declare them parasitical and obsolete and reactionary, represent a splendid affirmation of human freedom and afford a glimpse of eternity itself.

For survivors of the Holocaust, however, the *hasidim* are no longer distinctly available as a living embodiment of resistance to historical inevitabilities, or supposed inevitabilities. The characters in *Enemies*, many of them, live with the fear that the Holocaust really did show that the nineteenth-century ideologists who claimed that the voices of Nature and History were the voices of God were right, after all. "Slaughtering Jews," says Masha, "is part of nature. Jews must be slaughtered—that's what God wants." One can no longer see eternity in the *hasidim* because they and eternity itself have been consumed by the Holocaust. "Everything has already happened," Herman thought. "The creation, the flood, Sodom, the giving of the Torah, the Hitler holocaust. Like the lean cows of Pharaoh's dream, the present had swallowed eternity, leaving no trace." *Enemies* does not (like Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, for example) explore the possibility of recovery from the trauma for those Jews who have survived the Holocaust, but assumes that, for the Jews generally, the Holocaust was the end of the world. For Herman the only future lies in the past, as it exists not in living anachronisms like the *hasidim* but in what he calls "Jewish books." For Herman, and, by implication, thousands like him, there is no community or home to

which to return: "These writings were home. On these pages dwelt his parents, his grandparents, all his ancestors."

At the end of the earlier novel, *The Manor*, Calman Jacoby had sought refuge from the acrid dissolvents of Polish Jewry in his shelves of sacred books which reunited him with generations of his ancestors: "The Hebrew letters were steeped in holiness, in eternity." Calman understood, though he could not conceptualize, the truth that all those secularizing and reformist movements within the Jewish community which sought to confer upon the Jews emancipation and human rights had, in fact, deprived them of their freedom and their humanity. To be human was to stand where one's ancestors had stood, rooted in the language and laws and customs which were a permanent affront to evolutionism and progressivism.

For the survivors of the Holocaust, Jewish books become not only the means of remaining human by placing themselves within the buried life of their ancestors; they become the instrument for the resurrection of the dead. As another Herman, Herman Gombiner, in the story called "The Letter Writer," says: "The spirit cannot be burned, gassed, hanged, shot. Six million souls must exist somewhere." Gombiner, during an illness, goes in search of his lost relatives, and his quest leads him, via Canal Street in New York City, into an underworld charnel-house, where he meets a gravedigger tending the bones. "How," asks Herman, "can anyone live here?" "Who would want such a livelihood?" The answer, of course, is that this is where Singer has chosen to live.

We can see this very clearly in one of Singer's supernatural tales called "The Last Demon." Of the many stories in which he uses a first-person narrator who bears marked resemblances to the author, none comes so close to representing the author's inner relationship to his own work as this one. The narrator of the tale tells of his plight as the last remaining demon, whose occupation is gone because man himself has become a demon: to proselytize for evil in these times would be carrying coals to Newcastle. Like Singer himself, the last demon has been deprived of his subject, the Jews of eastern Europe. "I've seen it all," he says, "the destruction of Tishevit, the destruction of Poland. There are no more Jews, no more demons. . . . The community was slaughtered, the holy books burned, the cemetery desecrated." Like Singer, the last demon attempts to speak as if history had *not* destroyed his subject and as if he could defy time: "I speak in the present tense as, for me, time stands still." Like Singer, the last demon knows, or thinks he knows, that there is no judge and no judgment, and that to the generation which has indeed succeeded in becoming wholly guilty the only Messiah that will come is death: "The generation is already guilty seven times over, but Messiah does not come. To whom should he come? Messiah did not come for the Jews, so the Jews went to Messiah." Like

Singer, finally, the demon must sustain himself on dust and ashes and Yiddish books.

I found a Yiddish storybook between two broken barrels in the house which once belonged to Velvel the Barrelnmaker. I sit there, the last of the demons. I eat dust. . . . The style of the book is . . . Sabbath pudding cooked in pig's fat: blasphemy rolled in piety. The moral of the book is: neither judge, nor judgment. But nevertheless the letters are Jewish. . . . I suck on the letters and feed myself. . . . Yes, as long as a single volume remains, I have something to sustain me.

It is noteworthy that the attempt to resurrect Jewish life in Israel, one of the most extraordinary instances of national rebirth in history, plays almost no part in Singer's fiction; rather, he chooses to make of literature itself the instrument for preserving the memory, and resurrecting the souls, of the dead. The literature upon which this massive task devolves is no longer a sacred literature, nor is it written in Hebrew, the traditional sacred tongue. Yet, through an ironic reversal of the traditional relationship between Hebrew and Yiddish, the language of the majority of the victims of the Holocaust becomes for Singer the *loshen khoydesh*, the holy tongue of the Jewish people:

The deader the language, (Singer has said), the more alive is the ghost. Ghosts love Yiddish, and, as far as I know, they all speak it. . . . I not only believe in ghosts but also in resurrection. I am sure that millions of Yiddish-speaking corpses will rise from their graves one day, and their first question will be: Is there any new book in Yiddish read? For them Yiddish will not be dead.

And, we are implicitly invited to add, because of Yiddish they will not be dead. In his literary character, that is, in his subject matter and his language, Singer has made himself into a splendid anachronism whose flourishing existence defies the death-sentence that was passed upon the Jewish people in the nineteenth century and was nearly carried out in the twentieth.

On The Necessity of a Jewish-Marxist Dialogue

NORMAN LEVINE

THE SECOND WORLD WAR IMPACTED CONTRA-puntually on Jewish and Christian theology. Christian theology was radicalized through its contact with Hitler, Viet-Nam and the Third World Revolution. Judaism was the victim of both Hitler and the Third World Revolution, as represented by the Al Fatah. Therefore, after 1945, Jewish theology became inward, menaced, and self-cultivating.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pivotal figure in post-World War II Christian thought. Captive and ultimately corpse of the Nazis, Bonhoeffer rejected the Lutheran tradition of a radical separation between the earthly and the divine. In the face of absolute terror, he maintained that it was sinful to retreat in order to find purification in prayer and meditation. God must be found in this world. The meaning of religious life, for Bonhoeffer, is not to be discovered in the expectation of other-worldly salvation, but through the realization of Christian ethics in the now, the imitation of Christ in the present. To flee from the world, physically or spiritually, is to be an accomplice to terror. Bonhoeffer's trajectory leads to the secularization of the eschatological promise of Christianity.

Succeeding Christian theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, have continued along the line of advance opened by Bonhoeffer. The "Death of God" theologians, Hamilton Robinson and Louis Altizer, built upon these foundations. God was dead, not as a fact, but as millennialism; not as a human experience, but as a metaphysical abstraction. The God of ontological absence, was, therefore, to be replaced by the divinity of immanence. "Death of God" theology confirms that individual salvation can not be separated from the redemption of the world. The thrust of Christian existence was redirected from prayerful immersion in the infinite into the negation of present terror, into a realized and fulfilled future, redirected to the celebration of life so that the imminent fullness of life is not only affirmed but actively uncovered and revealed.

At this juncture, radical Christian theologians entered into a dialogue with atheistic and revolutionary Marxism. Both sides, Christian and Marxist alike, agreed to overlook the long-standing animosity between Church and Party. Both sides, theists and dialecticians, agreed to side-step the thorny problem of God's existence. These agreements were

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possible because there was more to pull them together than to pull them apart.

A leading Marxist theoretician and a former member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, Roger Garaudy was one of the first to initiate a Christian-Marxist dialogue. In his book, *From Anathema to Dialogue*, he calls for an alliance between the Christian Churches and Marxism. His sentiments were later echoed by the hard-line American Bolshevik, Herbert Aptheker, in *The Urgency of Marxist-Christian Dialogue*.

Garaudy contends that Marxists and Christians find their primary enemy in the bureaucratic authoritarianism of both socialist and capitalist systems. Whether in the guise of American intervention in Viet-Nam, or of Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, imperialism is another common opponent. Both Marxists and Christians agree that the struggle for human dignity is of paramount importance, whether for the black in America, the Jew in Russia or the Hindu in Bangladesh. The alliance between Christian Churches and Marxism is grounded in the fact that both have the same enemies, both have similar desires. The old problem of the existence of God has been bypassed. Neither atheists nor theists wish to be incinerated in a nuclear holocaust.

On a more profound level, radical Christianity and Marxism have been able to enter into a dialogue because in the contemporary world they shared a common set of theoretical presuppositions. Radical Christian theology had killed the metaphysically transcendent and abstracted God. Christian millenarianism had been secularized. Consequently, both Marxists and radical Christians talk of the future, of an openness to what is coming, of hope hoped and materialized. A doctrine of immanence has become common to both. Marxism speaks in terms of labor, of the activity of humanity as it recreates its world. Radical Christianity talks in terms of ethical *praxis*, the belief that only human action can redeem the world. Consequently, radical Christian and Marxist alike stress the role of human activity, of man as the responsible causal agent, the generative factor, in either the salvation or the construction of the world. Lastly, both understand the value in Being. Morality does not reside in an extra-terrestrial plane. Existence in itself has value. Goodness is present *in* Being. Therefore, life must be celebrated. What is present in Being must be externalized, must be objectified. That objectification is the ground of the moral.

It is time now for a Jewish-Marxist dialogue. It is time now to open a dialogue between Jewish theism and Jewish radicalism. Philosophically, an opening to the left is necessary. Classical Jewish theology is rich in meaning for the contemporary quest for social justice and social humanism. Classical Jewish theology abounds in ideas that can act as a bridge

between Judaism and Marxism, for, in truth, the old antipathy between Left and Synagogue is outmoded in the face of contemporary problems. It is understood that Marxism is larger than the Al Fatah. Jewish theology must not allow the present political confrontation between Israel and Palestinian terrorism to blind it to the fact that Marxism is a world-wide movement, that it exists outside of the Palestinians and other terrorists, that there is much within both Jewish Marxism and non-Jewish Marxism with which Jewish theology can begin to communicate.

Because the Jewish God has always been a God of history, Auschwitz destroyed the Jewish faith in history. YHWH acted at the Red Sea. He *also* acted at Sinai. After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Messianic age was synonymous with the return to Zion. But Auschwitz, too, is a historical event. Are the covenant and gas chambers dual aspects of the same divinity? How is it possible to reconcile the God of Abraham with the God who was witness to the death of His chosen people? The classical tradition of Jewish theology of a God who acted in history has suffered a violent and ashen rupture.

Post-holocaust Jewish theology was faced with a God who was inscrutable. God became a puzzlement and ambiguous; Jewish thought became heavy with despair. Classical Jewish thought had been buttressed by faith in a God who intervened in history. Post-holocaust Jewish thought sank into the emptiness of an invisible God. It lost faith in history and could never trust the future again. Human action seemed helpless against the blind forces of fate. Christian and Jewish thought, thus, moved in exactly antithetical directions. Both agreed that God was dead. But the death of the Christian God meant his reappearance in temporal history. The death of the Jewish God meant not only the disappearance of God from secular history, but the disappearance of God beyond human cognitive powers.

The work of Richard Rubenstein is illustrative of the above assertions. Of his two books, *After Auschwitz* and *The Religious Imagination*, the second charts his retreat to Freud. Ideas like primal crime, totemic guilt and death wish find their way to its pages. Not only are these concepts anthropologically unsound and philosophically unjustifiable, but they are also psychoanalytically outmoded. Rubenstein has fallen victim to the pessimism and irrationality of Freud, because the Freud who envisioned human fate as beyond individual rational control, who saw man as the prisoner of unconscious and primordial passion, reflected the rabbi's own feeling of a historical universe which was both mad and bent on murder. Rubenstein's capitulation to Freud is a capitulation to decadence.

After Auschwitz offers a clue to Rubenstein's malaise. Several essays in it describe Rubenstein's visits to the death camps of Europe, others indicate the psychological and moral trauma of these visits. Rubenstein

admits to the surrender of the messianic hope, he admits that the religion of the Pharisees is most proper to an age of religious darkness. In essence, he admits to a religion of anguish, despair and defeat. Not only is the God of history dead, in his theology, but the God of dramatic encounter, of wished-for presence is also dead. Returning to medieval Judaic theology, Rubenstein resurrects the Lurianic concept of God, who, having created the world and emptied himself in this act of origination, then withdrew from His object. After Auschwitz, Rubenstein's God is a God of absence, and temporal social existence is left devoid of divine encounter and intervention. The Sinaic God has been wiped out by Berchtesgaden.

Emil Fackenheim is a thinker of more profound dimensions than Rubenstein. Systematic and penetrating, Fackenheim has related Judaic theology to the deeper currents of western philosophy in general. Although there is much in his work which stresses the need for human renewal, the need for human activity, the preponderant weight of his thought stresses the limitation, the borders of human deed. Fackenheim does not celebrate human potential. Of course, he is aware that the creation of God was both a miracle and evidence of a creator who acted, but Fackenheim emphasizes the inability, the deficiency of human nature and activity in the attainment of a just and harmonious existence. Because his talents are of a major scale his shortcomings are the greater, and Fackenheim remains imprisoned in the cultural despair of post-holocaust Jewish thought.

In the pages of *Quest for Past and Future*, he offers a diminished and maimed anthropological view of man. For Fackenheim, existence is inherently tragic. Within historical time, man can find no ultimate integration with either society, nature or God. Within historical time, man cannot find ultimate self-realization. In Fackenheim's vision, man is sinful, deficient, dependent. For his achievement of righteousness, realization and justification man is totally dependent upon God. Fackenheim asserts that even though man is ultimately dependent, man does not know what he is ultimately dependent upon because the God of Fackenheim is a hidden, inscrutable, God-in-abeyance.

Contrary to the tradition of prophetic Judaism, contrary to the messianic trust of Judaism, Fackenheim affirms that history can never be a realm of fulfilled meaning. Man is incapable of self-redemption; history is incapable of self-redemption. In the end, Fackenheim is reduced to an essentially Lutheran position: man cannot save himself; only God saves. Man must wait for the redemptive act of God with the assurance that God is just and loving, but without knowing for sure the face or the mind of God. In the post-holocaust malaise, the prophetic hope and openness of Judaism have petrified.

The seeds of Fackenheim's historical pessimism are to be found in

his categorical rejection of the Hegelian left. In his *Encounter Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy*, Fackenheim, influenced by the work of Edmund Silberner, disappointingly accepts the myth and slander that socialism, and, particularly, Marx and Lenin, are inherently anti-Semitic. Furthermore, the humanistic atheism of the Hegelian left is Fackenheim's and modern philosophy's real enemy. The Hegelian left is predicated upon the idea that true Being can be realized in history. Both conceptions are anathema to Fackenheim. Therein lie the reasons for his imprisonment in pessimism. Fackenheim affirms the distinctiveness of the divine as opposed to the human, and he also affirms the necessity of abandoning the human to the position of *Waiting for Godot*. When he does so, Fackenheim immediately cuts himself off from the Hegelian left and the Marxist tradition of anthropological immanence, of critical-*praxis*, of human externalization and objectification. The price which Fackenheim has paid is that both his religion and his philosophy surrender the concepts of hope, of future, of human potentiality, of progress, of the belief that man can rationally and humanely fashion his future. When Fackenheim made his intellectual capitulation, he not only abandoned the vital prophetic-progressive tradition of Judaism, but he also demonstrated the inwardness, the conservatism of post-Hitlerian Jewish consciousness.

Fortunately, there exists a body of modern Jewish literature which has remained true to the prophetic tradition of Jewish culture and which incorporates such major themes as hope, openness to future, historical fulfillment, immanence, the potentiality of human *praxis*, and the value of Being. This body of Jewish literature not only escaped the cultural pessimism and negation-of-history of most contemporary Jewish mentality, but it also offered a bridge, an opening for a Jewish-Marxist dialogue. To repeat, the question here is not about the existence or non-existence of God. The question posed here does not concern the deeper loyalty to Party or to Synagogue. The question before us is the contemporary wasteland. The answer is the transcendence of this contemporary wasteland. The problem then becomes to find a common conceptual armory, to find notions and themes which are shared by both Jews and Marxists, so that they can join and ally in the process of transcendence.

Influenced by European existentialism, Franz Rosenzweig concentrated upon the notions of creation, creation anew, human involvement in creation anew. In the *Star of Redemption*, Rosenzweig focuses not upon divine-human encounter, but upon the theme of creation. Indebted to Nietzsche, Rosenzweig pictures a world which is ever being created anew, and calls upon man to say yea, to affirm, and to participate in, this ongoing process. For Rosenzweig, the world is unfinished. It is Becoming, Eternal Becoming. Man, the Yea-Saver must collaborate and participate in this ongoing and continuous creation. The role of man is

vital: human *praxis* plays a central, pivotal role in Rosenzweig's thought. Human action is an indispensable component of historical fulfillment. Rosenzweig's conception is essentially historical. Creation is the enduring base of things; that is, history as process is the primal factum of existence. But Rosenzweig welcomes this historicity. It means that the unfinished world requires man to complete it.

Rosenzweig's anthropology is dignified, is Promethean. Reflecting the tones of Nietzsche, Rosenzweig speaks of man as something which moved beyond himself, as self-transcendent. In his essay, "Understanding the Sick and the Healthy," Rosenzweig identifies man as one who signifies. Man is a creature who gives names. In short, man is the being who gives meaning to the world around him. Truth does not exist, but man brings truth into existence. History does not exist, but man brings history into the future. Rosenzweig not only testifies to the activity, but also to the fact that man has brought signification to existence. Man is the generative principle. Rosenzweig conducted an anthropocentric revolution: he made man the center, the axis of history.

In 20th century Jewish theology Martin Buber perfected the theme of anthropological immanence. Never wavering from his philosophical beliefs, Buber throughout his life stressed human action and human deed, human participation in creation. In his book, *The Prophetic Faith*, he writes of a divine-human "conjunction;" about the "partnership" between man and the divine in the on-going creation of the world. In another work, the *Eclipse of God*, Buber talks about human "participation in creation."

Both Rosenzweig and Buber began their philosophizing from the idea of God as Creator. Theirs is not a God of commandment, not a God of the Midrash, but a God who is the ground of the ever-renewing basis of life. Human independence and human responsibility, according to Buber, are twin themes which complement this openness to the future. In the *Eclipse of God*, Buber states that God established man with "an independence which has since remained undiminished." He repeats similar concepts in *The Prophetic Faith*, where he asserts that God "works through the independence of man;" and, again, that "God acts through man." Freedom, independence and responsibility are all allied concepts. They are important concepts because they have added dignity and generative power to human existence. Furthermore, it is impossible to stress the importance of human deeds, human actions, unless one also assumes human freedom and responsibility.

In the spirit of the prophets, Buber stresses the notion of historicity. For Buber, the historical is not reduced to a succession of concentration camps. Through human decisions taking place in time, man can "co-operate in the redemption of the world" (*Israel and the World*). Buber likes to talk about human "beginnings," and when he does so he touches

again upon the central concept of on-going creation. But it is impossible to talk of continuous creation, without assuming the dignity, as well as the redemptive power, of the historical. One of Buber's basic themes is the saving mission of history as it proceeds and emanates from the source of human deed and decision.

The theology of Rosenzweig and Buber is, thus, a bridge between Judaism and Marxism. The paths of 20th century Jewish theology and 20th century Marxist theory cross and meet at several conceptions. The Marxist notions of anthropological immanence, of *praxis*, of critical activity are consonant with the Rosenzweig-Buber ideas of human participation in creation, in the redemptive quality of human actions. In addition, the Marxist commitment to historicity, to future, to societal transformation, correspond to the Rosenzweig-Buber modern messianic faith in history. Stressing the goodness of God in creation, Rosenzweig-Buber relate to the historical as continuous becoming-into-being, as renewal, as beginning, and such ideas mirror the Marxist dedication to hope, the transcending power of negation. Lastly, the conceptions of objectification, of externalization and of value in Being, which are so central to Marxist ethics, overlap and cohere to the Rosenzweig-Buber idea of human decision, of man who must act because human deed is a necessary conjunction with divine. For Buber and Rosenzweig, humans are required to act, because only through their action is creation reaffirmed and supported in its continuity; in this co-sponsorship in creation, man finds encounter with the divinity.

A Jewish-Marxist dialogue would bring needed renewal to Jewish thought. Inspired by the work of Edmund Silberner, most Jewish thought automatically assumes that an inherent contradiction exists between Marxism and Judaism. Jewish authors turn out articles demonstrating the anti-Semitism of socialists, particularly of Marx and Lenin. Obviously there were socialists who were anti-Semites, but in subsequent articles I hope to show that it is patently false to accuse either Marx or Lenin of anti-Semitism, and patently false to assume an imbedded antipathy between Marxism and Judaism. An opening to the left, a Jewish-Marxist encounter, would remove this ideological blockage. It would also reveal how the post-holocaust Jewish fear and retreat from history would be transcended. Through this encounter, Jewish thought would be helped to return to its classical dimension, to a messianic expectation of the future. Living in history, instead of history being a grave, would again become a redemptive exercise.

Furthermore, Jewish thought would again be redevoted to the prophetic quest for social justice. After all, Ber Borochov was right. In his book, *Nationalism and the Class Struggle*, he points out that nationalism and the conquest of a Jewish state are primary objectives of Jewish renewal because a state is a necessary precondition for social reconstruc-

tion. For Borochoy, for Marxist nationalism, the end is social and ethical transformation. The means to *achieve* it can be only through territorial sovereignty.

Clearly, the State of Israel is still endangered, because of the geopolitical dimension that is its fate. But equally clear is its survival. Because of the threat of Jewish extinction, world Jewish thought in the 20th century is primarily concerned with nationalism and territorial sovereignty. Statism and survival are synonymous. Israel has been won and the first stage of the Jewish revolution has been completed. But it is spiritually and philosophically unsound for Jewish thought to be fixated at the level of nationalism, to be totally absorbed and immersed in the issue of statism. It is now necessary to move into Borochoy's second stage. In spite of the Arab threat, Jewish thought must pass beyond nationalism, to the quest for social and ethical transformation. Statism should exist as the ground for future Jewish thought, as the basis of its further expansion and exploration; it should not exist as an excuse for Jewish thought, as the finality of Jewish thought. Israel exists. It is now necessary for the messianic vision and hope to survive.

Auschwitz has become the great Jewish myth of the 20th century. It must be displaced. Jewish consciousness must be changed. It is time for a new myth. The Six Day War subsumed Auschwitz. Only through the meaninglessness of Auschwitz could the celebration of June, 1967 have been possible. Victory has sublated death. Triumph has sublated the grave. The Six Day War is the central Jewish experience of the 20th century. It is an act of human transcendence. It is an answer to categorical nothingness because it places Judaism at the center of celebration.

But June, 1967 was revolutionary *praxis* in action. It was national revolutionary warfare. In June, 1967 Jewish nationalism averted extinction. As such, it is the present high point of pure nationalistic Zionism. It is an end and, in Buber's sense, a "beginning;" it can still introduce a new stage in the evolution of Israel. But it is Marxist critical *praxis*, Marxist revolutionary warfare. Such is the positivity of a Jewish-Marxist dialogue.

Abraham M. Klein's Poetic Heritage

Review-Essay by JACOB KABAKOFF

The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein. Compiled and with an introduction by MIRIAM WADDINGTON. McGraw-Hill Ryerson. Toronto and New York, 1974. x + 373 pp.

THE PUBLICATION OF ABRAHAM M. KLEIN'S complete poetic works affords an opportunity to consider his unique role as a talented artist whose creativity was enhanced by a profound love of Jewish culture and of the Jewish tradition. The editor, Miriam Waddington, has seen fit to reprint as an appendix Ludwig Lewisohn's foreword to Klein's first published volume *Hath Not A Jew . . .* (1940). In that essay, Lewisohn had already hailed Klein as "the first Jew to contribute authentic poetry to the literature of English speech."

Jewish critics and readers have continued to see Klein as the outstanding Jewish poet writing in English. His collections, *The Hitleriad* (1944), *Poems* (1944) and *The Rocking Chair* (1948) were each viewed as important milestones in the work of a competent craftsman. When Klein published his last book, *The Second Scroll* (1951), which he called a novel but which is actually a mixture of many genres, Maurice Samuel termed it "an important event not simply in English or Anglo-Jewish literature, but in the life of English-speaking Jewry." Samuel greeted Klein's writing as representative of a harmonious blending of Western culture and Jewish knowledge and tradition. He further indicated that Klein's work had pointed the way to achieving a true symbiosis of American and Jewish cultures.

Klein's intense Jewishness did not detract from his standing and reputation in Canadian literary criticism. On the contrary, his work was upheld, time and again, as an example of Canada's hospitality to multi-lingual and multi-cultural expression. Klein's linguistic craftsmanship was pointed to as the product of a unique environment in which it was possible to blend the Jewish tradition with the English and French cultures. When Klein published his last book of poetry, *The Rocking Chair*, which incorporated the Canadian folk spirit and drew upon his Montreal environment for subject matter, he was acclaimed for doing for Canadian culture what he had previously done for the Jewish tradition.

Klein was able to move with ease from general to Jewish themes and to integrate these two aspects of his work. In the *Collected Poems*, Waddington has brought together not only his poetry which was pre-

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viously published in book form, but, also, his many poetic contributions to both general and Jewish periodicals.

Already, in his hitherto uncollected early poems (1927–37), Klein reveals his predilection for Jewish thematic material and for utilizing the Jewish tradition. Biblical characters, the holidays, folk motifs and medieval Jewish chronicles all serve as sources of inspiration for him. His ability to make use of wit and whimsy and to paint satiric pen portraits of diverse characters is amply demonstrated. When dealing with medieval themes, such as Christian persecution, he is adept at using an archaic Elizabethan style which lends distance to his subject yet accentuates its specific Jewish character. Alongside his varied Jewish poems during his early period, there are also poems about love and the seasons and pieces in which the death motif predominates.

In order to present Klein's poetry chronologically, Waddington has seen fit to include also, under a separate rubric, 35 of his radical poems (1932–38), which the poet himself never incorporated into his books. They express his caustic reaction, during the depression years, to poverty and injustice. His "Diary of Abraham Segal, Poet," which describes the situation of a proletarian Jewish poet-clerk and his disdain for capitalism and polite society, is especially revealing. Klein himself earned a law degree from the University of Montreal and practiced law with varying success. He also served as the editor of Canadian Jewish magazines and taught English for a short time at McGill University. On the basis of his difficult personal experiences and his acquaintance with conditions in the Montreal needle trades, he could identify fully with the lot of the worker and, particularly, of the intellectual.

When Klein made his debut in book form with his *Hath Not A Jew . . .*, he emerged full blown as an individualistic poet who was aware of his separateness. In the opening poem, "Ave Atque Vale," he turns to the Talmudic sages and professes his deepest admiration for them. His pithy characterizations of them, beginning with Ben-Zakkai, make it clear that he feels no dichotomy between his preoccupation with the masters of English literature and his love of the Talmudic teachers. Indeed, he defends the sages against their having been maligned as "pharisaic" in the Christian tradition. He writes:

When he forsakes you, Shakespeare, for a space,
Or you, Kit Marlowe of the four good lines,
Or Jonson, you, your sack, your muscadine, your wines,
This Jew

Betakes him to no pharisaic crew . . .

Klein's identification with the Jewish fate spans many periods and many lands. When he contemplates the plight of the Jew throughout the ages, down to the Nazi era, in his "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," he has only praise for Jewish steadfastness. He confesses, however, that, in

comparison with his father, he "is a pauper in spirit, a beggar in piety / Cut off without a penny's worth of faith." He returns again and again to the problem of Jewish suffering, and among his strongest poems are those expressing both anguish and anger. "Design For Medieval Tapestry" chronicles various Jewish reactions to the Jewish fate, ranging from protest to acceptance. In another of his poems it is the familiar figure of Reb Levi Yizchok of Berditshev who intones the question, "how long?"

Klein's poetic work, *The Hitleriad*, in which Hitler, Goebbels and their henchmen are made the butt of biting irony and sharp mockery, must have served a cathartic purpose for the writer. In this long work he shifted from light rhyming stanzas to heavy couplets. Klein once stated candidly: "I have no illusions about the high poetic qualities of this poem; it is satire..." Yet he was moved to write it in order to bring home the lesson of the Holocaust and to offer an impassioned plea for the re-instatement of a just order in the world.

The moving cycle, "The Psalter of Avram Haktani," which opens his book, *Poems*, runs the gamut of human emotions. Here Klein makes use of Biblical cadences and imagery to record the wrestlings of his spirit. Intensely personal, these poems are, in a sense, also a profound reaction to the Holocaust. In "Psalm III: A Psalm of Abraham, When He Was Sore Pressed," Klein states that he would have preferred to be created a beast rather than a man-child—"For easier is the yoke than the weight of thought,/ Lighter the harness than the harnessed heart." In another poem, "Psalm XXIII," which questions divine justice, he proclaims that he would like to "... seek out the abominable scales/ On which heavenly justice is mis-weighed" and destroy them, so that justice may be done. In ballad and poem he depicts the tragic Jewish lot. Whether it is Solomon Warshawer facing his Nazi persecutors or Rabbi Yom-Tob of Mayence who accepts martyrdom during the Middle Ages, it is the anguished "voice that was heard in Ramah" that speaks to us through Klein's poetry.

His poems of doubt and grief voice a Jewish attitude which has its roots in the Bible and which has often been reiterated in Hebrew poetry. His response to the Jewish tragedy rings with authenticity, for he writes always as one who is heir to the age-old Jewish tradition. He expresses his link to historic Jewry most forcefully in "Psalm XXXVI: A Psalm Touching Genealogy":

Not sole was I born, but entire genesis:
 For to the fathers that begat me, this
 Body is residence. Corpuscular,
 They dwell in my veins, they eavesdrop at my ear,
 They circle, as with Torahs, round my skull,
 In exit and in entrance all day pull
 The latches of my heart, descend, and rise—
 And there look generations through my eyes.

In a later poem, "Psalm 175: A Psalm of Resignation," included in the section of hitherto uncollected "Poems 1941-47," Klein states his readiness to accept the flaws which he perceives in God's justice and to view them as "part of the perfect whole." He will complain no more—"For I am weary of the quarrel with my God." In this same section the editor has reprinted from Klein's *The Second Scroll* the poem entitled "Autobiographical," a moving evocation of the influences which molded his youthful days in Montreal. From this work, too, she has culled the poet's powerful "Elegy" for the victims of the Holocaust, selections from which have been included in the new *Mahzor* published by the Rabbinical Assembly of America.

The poems in Klein's last collection, *The Rocking Chair*, are characterized by a change in style and the adoption of modernist techniques. Here Klein paid homage to Canada and its folklore and brought within his purview the Indians and French Canadians. He sang eloquently of Mt. Royal and the Quebec winter and extolled the wheat and grain elevators of Canada. His talent for portraiture and social criticism, which he had exhibited earlier in his Jewish poems, is here applied to specific Canadian themes.

In a separate monograph, entitled *A. M. Klein* (Toronto, 1970), Waddington quotes from a letter which the poet addressed to James Laughlin, his non-Jewish editor. Concerning his Canadian poetry, he said:

As for myself, I believe I still have a contribution to make as a Jew, a contribution to the culture of the group—bound by a thousand bonds, infancy, habit, nostalgia, association, paysage—all the little things that constitute true patriotism. Other cultures, therefore, I meet as an equal, not as an interloper. I travel on my own passport.

Klein's *The Rocking Chair* earned for him the governor-general's medal and was hailed as the first real expression of a Canadian regionalism. Yet, although he shifted his emphasis from Jewish themes to general ones, his poems are not devoid of Jewish coloration. In "Grain Elevator," he uses a Biblical allusion: "for here, as in a Josephdream, bow down/ the sheaves the grains, the scruples of the sun/ garnered for darkness . . ." His evocation of a scene at the shrine at St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal in "The Cripples," in which he describes the hopes and faith of those who come to be miraculously healed, ends on a characteristic Jewish note: "And I who in my own faith once had faith like this,/ but have not now, am crippled more than they." His poem in praise of "Bread" prayerfully invokes the image of the Levites of old: "Bakers most priestly, in your robes of flour,/ White Levites at your altar'd ovens, bind,/ Bind me forever in your ritual . . ."

One of the finest poems in *The Rocking Chair* is "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape," which can be taken as an introspective personal state-

ment, depicting the loneliness and isolation of the artist. Klein presents his credo as a poet and defines the poetic mission which he often finds to be debased by seekers after popular acclaim. He takes solace in the fact that the true goal of the poet is not to achieve fame but to retain his integrity and discover his own self. As a man of high ambitions, the poet must forego all in order not to compromise his ideals. To preserve his lofty role he "makes of his status as zero a rich garland,/ a halo of his anonymity,/ and lives alone, and in secret shines/ like phosphorus, at the bottom of the sea."

Klein was at home in the literature of a number of languages and absorbed many influences. It should not be overlooked that among these latter was that of Hayyim Nahman Bialik, several of whose poems he translated during the 30s and 40s. One of them is Bialik's *Yehi Helki Imakhem*, which Klein translated in 1936 under the title "God Grant My Part and Portion Be...". Bialik, too, speaks here of the humble and the mute of soul. He, too, refers to their beauty which hides in the sea depths and is convinced that these "poets of most lovely silence" who live a lonely life exert a profound influence upon the world.

Klein follows a similar line of thought and combines it with several other ideas and allusions. Thus, for example, he recalls "Lycidas," Milton's famed elegy. In that poem, Milton describes how Lycidas, the drowned poet, had scorned worldly success in order to devote himself wholeheartedly to the Muse.

Throughout his career, Klein had a special attachment to Hebrew poetry. One of his hopes had been to obtain a grant that would enable him to devote himself for an entire year to the task of translating Bialik. He translated from a number of other modern Hebrew poets, including Greenberg, Shlonsky, Karni and Rachel. In *The Second Scroll*, his purpose for going to Israel is not only to search for his long-lost Uncle Melech, but, also, to find and translate the authentic new poetry which is being written in the land. The passion and rhetoric of modern Hebrew poetry are echoed in many of his poems, particularly in those dealing with the Holocaust. He was influenced, as well, by Yiddish poetry and, at times, incorporated Yiddish idioms, which he rendered in literal fashion. He was motivated all of his life by a vision of Zion, of which he sang in such poems as "Yehuda Halevi, His Pilgrimage." This vision made him all the more conscious of his forlornness "beneath these northern skies."

Klein achieved a high degree of linguistic virtuosity. Archaisms, erudite literary allusions and innovative word plays and formations dot his work. His imagery draws equally upon Jewish and general sources. When his brother Velvel, dreams of jewels for his wife, they are "as large as wondrous eyes/ The eyes of Og, the giant-king of Bashan." He describes the sky as "dotted like th'unleavened bread" and compares the

moon to a "golden seder platter." In one of his poems, Job's explanation for the fact that God no longer hears is that "With clouds for cotton he has stopped his ears." The poet sees shadows of generations "crying *Abba* in the muffled night" and watches "upon the entangled branches of the dark/ my sons, my sons, my hanging Absaloms." Often his associations are tinged with humor and whimsy, as when he refers to the shadchan as a "cupid in a caftan" and to the rooster used in the *kapparat* ceremony prior to Yom Kippur as "plumaged proxy." His "Portraits of a Minyan" abound in many such clever word plays.

Klein was born in Montreal in 1909 and began to publish in the *Menorah Journal* and in Canadian magazines at the end of the 20s. His four books of poetry appeared during 1940-48 and his last published volume, *The Second Scroll*, came out in 1951. Only a sheaf of poems came from his pen during 1948-52, and these constitute the concluding section of his *Collected Poems*. The last twenty years of his life, until his passing in 1972, were years of silence occasioned by emotional pressures and mental illness.

Klein's poetic legacy is now before us in composite form. It has already served as material for dissertations and will undoubtedly continue to be a source of study and inspiration. Who is there that can presume to plumb the mind of so brilliant a spirit and say why it was plunged into despair and ceased to be productive? Be this as it may, his quarter of a century of creative accomplishment will stand out as a high point of Jewish-American writing in our century.

In addition to offering a sensitive reaction to Jewish tragedy, Klein's "The Psalter of Avram Haktani" touches upon various major events in his life. Did the poet have an intimation of things to come when he offered up, as part of his Psalter, "A Prayer of Abraham, Against Madness (Psalm XXII)"? In the opening stanzas of that prayer Klein wrote:

Lord, for the days allotted me,
Preserve me whole, preserve me hale!
Spare me the scourge of surgery
Let not my blood nor members fail.

But if Thy will is otherwise,
And I am chosen such an one
For maiming and for maladies
So be it; and Thy will be done.

Palsy the keepers of the house;
And of the strongmen take Thy toll.
Break down the twigs; break down the boughs.
But touch not, Lord, the golden bowl! . . .

The Problems Are Not New

Modern Jewish Ethics. ed., MARVIN FOX. Columbus, Ohio. Ohio State U. Press, 1975.

Reviewed by LEVI A. OLAN

ETHICS, ONCE a branch of philosophy and integral to theology, is today a vital concern for the market place and the scientific laboratory. The United States Chamber of Commerce is alerted by its chief economist, Carl Madden, to the threat of the exhaustion of resources and the increase in population growth. The answer which he suggests is a change in values and a new respect for the earth and its inhabitants. The National Endowment for the Humanities is funding programs in medical schools aimed at studies of biomedical research and the future of the human race. The prophet's warning "Do good and not evil that ye may live" has left its comfortable place in the Bible to confront modern man realistically.

The papers in this volume were presented at meetings of the Institute for Judaism and Contemporary Thought in Israel in 1972. The introductory article by the philosopher, Marvin Fox, describes Judaism as open to all truth through its carefully worked out interpretive method. Fundamentalism is dangerous both to science and religion; neither may legitimately dismiss the truths of the other. The rabbinic attitude is that the best evidence, whatever its source, must be accepted. Fox sets the tone for a discussion of modern Jewish ethics with the formula-tradition open to truth, "The seal of the Holy one, blessed be He, is truth."

The ethical issues discussed in the papers that follow are not new.

They were the concern of rabbinic literature, as well as of medieval Jewish philosophers. Ernst Simon raises again the meaning of *Reakha*, thy neighbor, in the Levitical command to love him as yourself. Who was a neighbor in the Biblical period and who is he today? A brief historical review of the subject leads to the conclusion that the term *re'a* moved from a rigid parochial view to a universal one. Professor Simon asks the modern Jew, whether in Israel or the diaspora, who is his neighbor and how well does he fulfill the Biblical commandment? The problems of a growing gap between the rich and the poor, the oriental communities in Israel, the reluctance to receive new immigrants, particularly from Russia, the former Arab residents of Biram and Ikrit. Are these our neighbors whom we are commanded to love? Hard as it may be, we are told that we must honor God's creature in each human being. Monotheism calls for a universalism in which we love our neighbor who is every man.

Professor Harold Fisch rejects Simon's universalistic interpretation. It is difficult enough to love all Jews. To ask us to love Germans after Auschwitz, Arabs after the October War, or Japanese after Pearl Harbor, is to set an ethical standard that is impossible for any human. He suggests, instead, that the relationship between the Jew and the non-Jew should be one of *hesed*, which implies, generally, a relation based on reciprocal obligation. It is a debt to be paid, as in '*gemilat hasadim*'. *Hesed* binds society together in a relationship of mutuality, a relationship that is possible, and even mandatory, between Israel and the nations, between Jew and non-Jew. Jakob Petuchowski supports the

more parochial interpretation with the view that the halakhah is sensible, not idealistic. A man is not required to give his life for another. If there is an inescapable choice, one's own life takes precedence. So in the case of integrating Jewish neighborhoods in America, the survival of the Jew precedes his obligation to the general moral demand of integration.

The ethical ingredient in the universalistic-parochial debate was recognized long ago, but it takes on urgency in a world engulfed by the violent confrontations of a lawless society. The unique position of the Jew in the modern world, as part of a particular people with a universal purpose, qualifies him to examine the ethical issues involved and to guide himself and others toward a better understanding.

A second ethical theme which runs through these papers is the relationship of law (Torah) to moral principles. Aharon Lichtenstein reflects a Maimonidean view, that the Torah is based on *lex naturalis*. If, as the rabbis say, the Torah exists for the purpose of promoting peace, then peace is a moral value to be assumed. It was recognized very early that the *din* of Torah is not adequate to all moral situations. Jerusalem was destroyed, said Rav Yohanan, because they judged solely on the basis of Torah law and did not act *lifnim mishurat hadin*, beyond the line of the law. There are situations which call for a higher moral demand than halakhah. There is also *midat hasidut*, the quality of special piety. Beyond the nomistic there is the command "and thou shalt do the right and the good."

The modern day political slogan of "law and order" appeals to a very narrow and limited view of ethics which assumes that the law exhausts the moral demands of human experience. Some call for jus-

tice and order, thus reaching for a higher principle of human relations. All of this comes close to the position of contextual morality. Judaism, says Lichtenstein, has rejected contextualism as a self-sufficient ethic, yet has embraced it as a *modus operandi* in large tracts of human experience. Some situations are best judged by fixed objective standards; others, depending on the circumstances, call for *lifnim mishurat hadin*. This is a valuable contribution to the modern discussion of ethics for our time. The difference, however, between the rabbinic approach and the modern secular age is in the command, "Thou shalt walk in His ways." There was authority for the *lifnim mishurat hadin*. What is the authority today for ethics beyond the law?

Meir Pa'il, who is currently serving as a member of the Knesset, retired from the military service with the rank of Colonel in 1971. His contribution to this discussion is entitled "The Dynamics of Power: Morality in Armed Conflict after the Six Day War." His concern is the ability of maintaining the *Tohar Ha-neshek*, the purity of arms. Can one treat an enemy as a human being while using the new weaponry which destroys without the soldier seeing the result of his action? Is the idea of "purity of arms" valid when a soldier no longer encounters human beings in front of him, nor sees the blood that he spills? The role of the soldier who is stationed in occupied territories like Gaza is wholly new to Jewish experience. Does a Jewish soldier kill a woman whose skirt is hiding the opening to a cave where enemy soldiers are hiding? The Arab terrorist comes out of a house waving a gun and in front of him are two Arab children. Does a soldier kill the children?

Does an Israeli soldier follow the

untrammelled instincts of the strong or does he try to maintain the very principles of justice and morality in which he believed when the nation was still weak? Pa'il concludes that the

most serious challenge before the State of Israel at this time is how to remain just and moral inwardly and outwardly, and that especially at a time when we are strong and tempted to use force and act unjustly. The way this challenge is met will, in the final analysis, determine just how Jewish the State of Israel really is.

Most responses to Pa'il caution against turning moral ideals into unreal sentiments. The woman who hid the enemy soldiers with her skirt must be killed, just as must be the two Arab children who shielded the terrorist. So in Viet Nam an American soldier shot a nine year old little girl who had a grenade in her hand. He cursed himself unmercifully for what he did. Is *Tohar Ha-neshek* a viable ethical principle in war?

Zvi Yaron, the Israeli writer and educator, raises the question of what Zionism called normalcy and of the new responsibilities which devolve upon the State. The ethical confrontation of the individual Jew in the diaspora is different from that of a State in which the majority are Jews. A modern State must make many moral decisions, —welfare, labor, social security, equality, war and defense, the treatment of minority communities, police, taxation, and a list equal to these. Israel as a State is faced, for the first time, with moral issues which are common to all modern states. Yaron makes the sad commentary that the religious establishment is affected by moral torpidity on issues affecting live human beings whilst stirring up much excitement over autopsies on the dead. It is a near tragedy that

the State of Israel, in its search for moral guidance, receives from the religious community only what Rabbi Kook called *proste frumkeit*, coarse piety.

This volume is worthy of study as an introduction to the far greater challenge which confronts the Jewish moral thinker today. In all these papers there is barely a recognition that Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Einstein had radically altered our understanding of the nature of the world and of man. There is no awareness of the new scientific revolution which has transformed man into a god who now has, or will soon have, the power to create life as he wills, and to destroy it when he chooses. Does Jewish moral thought have anything to contribute to the search for an ethical guide to the new technology and the new bio-medicine? What is desperately needed is to find an answer to the question "What is our moral responsibility for the right of unborn generations?"

The Institute for Judaism and Contemporary Thought in Israel is to be congratulated for a notable contribution to modern Jewish thought. *Keyn Yirbu*.

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A Passionate Statement

The Crucifixion of the Jews. By FRANKLIN H. LITTELL. New York. Harper & Row, 1975. 153 pp. \$7.95.

Reviewed by SAMUEL SANDMEL

PROFESSOR LITTELL in this book is not the calm academician. Rather, he is the passionate man of concern, in whom a fury burns that reminds one of the pre-exilic prophets. The dust-jacket carries a leg-

end as though a subtitle: "The Failure of Christians to Understand Jewish Experience." Professor Littell's passion arises both from his compassion for Jews and his sense of shock that Christendom, in his judgment, has lacked not alone compassion but even basic comprehension.

What has appalled him principally is that those who slew six million Jews in the Holocaust were "baptized Christians, from whom membership in good standing was not (and has not yet been) withdrawn," raising "the most insistent question about the credibility of Christianity" (p. 2). Terming the Holocaust the "crucifixion," the emergence of the State of Israel is viewed as the "resurrection"; the State of Israel "is substantial refutation of the Christian myth" about the end of the Jewish people "in the historic process."

Professor Littell ascribes a guilt to those Christians outside Nazi areas who were silent and to those who are able to be untouched by Jewish plights and efforts for rehabilitation, as in the State, as almost equal to the guilt of the Nazis. He is scornful of those Christians who are blind or hostile to "*the right of the Jewish people to self-identity and self-definition*" (his italics, p. 3).

So deep and earnest is Professor Littell's passion that his book at times lacks a certain orderliness, and his exposition includes certain re-iterations. He touches on some historic events of literature of early Christianity without always providing a fullness of explanation that might have been useful. Yet these flaws seem to me minor.

Professor Littell states over and over again the perspective from which he writes and the theme which he advocates for his Christian readers. His concern is not essentially Jews or Jewish people.

His concern is Christianity and Christian people. Since it is Christians who bear guilt, it is from Christians that atonement must arise. The fault, or faults, of Jews, cannot be allowed to obscure the need of Christian atonement, and it is in no way defensible for Christians to attempt to shed guilt by the device of pointing to such Jewish fault or faults.

The book has two appendices. Appendix A is "A Statement to our Fellow Christians." This statement, released in 1973, arose from a group of Christian theologians "who worked for four years on the subject 'Israel: the People, the Land, the State.'" Its second numbered paragraph advocates the enrichment that can come to Christians "by a careful study of post-biblical Judaism to the present day." Paragraph 3 states that "The singular grace of Jesus Christ does not abrogate the covenantal relationship of God with Israel . . . In Christ the Church shares in Israel's election without superseding it." The last two sentences of Paragraph 5 are: "Anti-Jewish polemics became a perennial feature of Christendom and reflected gross ignorance of Jewish history and religion. This sin has infected the non-Christian world as well." In paragraph 6, on the State of Israel, the document urges the churches "to give their prayerful attention to such central questions as the legitimacy of the Jewish state, the rights of the Palestinians, and the problem of refugees—Jewish as well as Arab." The next paragraph has these sentences:

The validity of the State of Israel rests on moral and juridical grounds. It was established in response to a resolution of the U.N. General Assembly, after termination of the British Mandate. . . . Christians who see Israel as something more than a political state

are not wrongly theologizing politics by understanding the existence of the Jewish state in theological terms.

Professor Littell served as chairman for the group of theologians for its first three years; he was succeeded by Father John Pawlikowski. It is useful to have this document available beyond pamphlet form.

Appendix B is "A Yom HaShoah Liturgy for Christians," "planned and . . . conducted" by Dr. Elizabeth Wright in the chapel at Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina in May 1972. The service "was reprinted by Christians Concerned for Israel" (which Professor Littell heads) "and is used by a growing number of Christian groups." The service includes readings from Albert H. Friedlander, editor, *Out of the Whirlwind*, and writings by people such as Elie Wiesel and Nelly Sachs. One notices nothing of Christian content in the service; one would assume that its use in a Christian setting is what can make the service Christian.

The book inevitably invites comparison with Rosemary Reuther's *Faith and Fratricide*. Allied in theme, the two books could scarcely be more different. Mrs. Reuther has written a book essentially theological, free of allusion to historic events in the march of anti-Semitism. Her theme is that anti-Semitism is not, and was not, a passing phase of Christian thought, but, rather, an essential ingredient of it. In my reading of Mrs. Reuther, what was most impressive and most

moving was the relative (note the word *relative*) absence of overt passion. Mrs. Reuther has written a book that goes to the very root of matters. It is the kind of book that will not, or should not, exhaust its usefulness in a single publisher's season.

Professor Littell's book is much more a tract for the times. This is not intended to denigrate the book, but only to indicate what sort of book it is. I do not think that Mrs. Reuther feels any less deeply than does Franklin Littell. But her book is essentially for the mind, and Littell's essentially for the heart. Hers seems to come from the scholar's study; his comes from the give and take of clerical affairs.

He writes:

I hope my handling of the discussion will be edifying to fellow-Christians and at least avoid offense to Jewish readers. The path we walk is like one strewn with buried land mines. I plan to explode as many as possible that were planted by Christians, and I count on the charity of Jewish friends if I walk too clumsily on ground hallowed by Jewish blood (p. 6).

This book is scarcely appropriate for the minor nit-picking that could occasionally be warranted. It is a record of the agony of a man of intelligence and heart, to whom Christianity is precious, and who therefore is under compulsion to speak out. He has done so with eloquent indignation.

SAMUEL SANDMEL is professor of Bible and Hellenistic literature at Huc-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio.

COMMUNICATIONS

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

Dr. Robert Gordis, in his Review-Essay on the new *Genesis* translation and commentary published by the Reform movement, assumes, unjustifiably I believe, that the modern reader of the Bible would rather "understand the Biblical text on its own terms, as it impinged upon the consciousness of the original hearers and readers" than as understood and brilliantly expounded upon by the classical commentaries. Yet, why should a reader of the Bible derive more inspiration from, or perceive more relevance in, a text expounded in its socio-historical context, "as it actually was", than he can from the illumination and understanding of countless generations of saints and scholars whose *exegesis* and *eisegesis* have nurtured the Jewish people for more than 2,000 years?

I deny his assumption and presumption that "unless we know what the Bible meant, (meaning the 'revelations' of post-Emancipation scholars) we cannot truly understand what it means, and our Biblical 'interpretation' is an intellectual sham and a delusion." Poor Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Nachmanides, Sforno, Gersonides and the rest! They didn't have the advantages of "modern" scholarly tools and *disciplines*. What did they know of archeology, and "higher" Biblical criticism, and ancient near-Eastern texts. How could their interpretations be "authentic"?

Nor is Dr. Gordis' appreciation of "the intrinsic value of the mass of later interpretation, both haggadic and halakhic, legal, ethical and religious" very meritorious because he places it in opposition to the "quest for the authentic and original meaning of the words" of the Bible. This is a kind of condescension which is unwarranted.

I submit that Sforno's interpretations are at least as "authentic" as those of Sarna, Gersonides' interpretations are at least as "authentic" as

Gordis', Kimchi's interpretations are as "authentic" as Cassuto's. Not only are they as authentic, but they are more relevant, timely and uplifting.

Perhaps Dr. Gordis should have suggested that modern scholarship provides us with *additional* insights into the Bible, rather than to intimate that without the findings of modern scholarship "Biblical interpretation is an intellectual sham and a delusion" because it is otherwise impossible to understand really "what the Bible meant."

If the Reform movement wants to shore up its ideological foundations by re-interpreting the Bible, all well and good. But this nonsense about the greater "authenticity" of contemporary Biblical interpretations really should be exposed.

Denver, Colorado STANLEY M. WAGNER

DR. GORDIS *replies*:

Rabbi Wagner is under the illusion that his letter is a critique of my review-essay of the new *Genesis*. What he has written is a diatribe. He follows the well-worn prescription for attacking unpalatable ideas by mixing equal parts of indignation, vituperation and distortion.

He has been in such a hurry to rush to the barricades with his blunderbuss that he has not taken the time to read the essay. Had he done so, he would have found that it clearly indicates, not only the necessity for *exegesis*, the quest for the original meaning of the Biblical text, but the value of *eisegesis*, the reading into the text of the religious, ethical and legal ideas of later generations. Because this recognition is fundamental for the understanding of Jewish literature and thought, the paragraph bears repeating:

This quest for the authentic and original meaning of the words by the Biblical lawgivers, historians,

prophets, sages and poets obviously *does not negate the intrinsic value of the mass of later interpretation, both haggadic and halakhic, legal, ethical and religious, engendered by the Bible through the centuries. The material, which is to be found in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, in the Qumran writings, in Philo and Josephus, in the Midrash and the Talmud, in the medieval philosophers, in the Hasidic teachers, and in modern theologians and philosophers, constitutes a cultural legacy of incomparable value. Its varied aspects are eminently worthy of being studied in their own right and for their own sake.* (Italics added.)

I need neither Rabbi Wagner's admonition nor his instruction in order to appreciate the intrinsic value of Talmudic and Midrashic interpretation, as well as the matchless contributions of the incomparable Rashi and the other great medieval commentators.

Unfortunately, Rabbi Wagner's lumping together of Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Sforno and Gersonides with Rashi and Nahmanides, makes one suspect that his understanding of their individual goals, methods and achievements is less than total. His fear of, and hostility to, the new stands in stark contrast to the openness to new ideas expressed by Rashi over eight hundred years earlier. His grandson, Rashbam, informs us, "I, Samuel ben Meir, his son-in-law (may the memory of the righteous be blessed), agreed with him (i.e., Rashi) and he confessed to me that if he had the leisure, he should have composed new commentaries according to the interpretation being created each day" (Rashbam, *Commentary on Genesis 37:2*).

With such defenders—against imaginary enemies—as Rabbi Wagner, the great Jewish classics need no detractors.

New York, N.Y.

ROBERT GORDIS

THE JEWISH SPECTATOR

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